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Dancing boy (*köçek*) (Jean Baptiste van Moor. *Recueil de cent estampes representant differentes nations du Levant*. Paris, 1714)

DANCE PERSPECTIVES

DANCES OF ANATOLIAN TURKEY

by Metin And

Cover designed by Karl Leabo

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DANCE PERSPECTIVES

A. J. PISCHL, SELMA JEANNE COHEN, Editors
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IN PERSPECTIVE

For this issue, the first comprehensive study in English of the dances of Turkey, we are indebted to the manager of Kavaklıdere Şarapları, the oldest and largest winery in that country. The manager is Metin And, who—in addition to being an authority on the dances of his native land—is recognized as one of the most prominent literary critics in Turkey and as a spokesman for its school of young, experimental writers.

Mr. And, who was born in Istanbul in 1927, received a Bachelor of Laws degree from the University of Istanbul and also studied at the University of London. In 1956, aided by a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation, he did research on dance in the libraries and theatres of the United States. This year, he was awarded a scholarship by the British Council to visit theatres in London.

Mr. And is the publisher of *Forum,* a fortnightly, intellectual review in Ankara, and the writer of a weekly column on drama for *Ulus,* one of that city's leading newspapers. He is also the author of *The Generous Turk* (Ankara, 1958), a study of the national character as used in the theatrical dances of the western world, and is now preparing *Forty Days and Forty Nights,* a book on early Turkish pageantry and triumphs.

For guidance in research on folklore, Mr. And wishes to acknowledge the work of Ferruh Arsunar, Mahmut Rağıp Gazimihal, Ahmet Kutsi Tecer, Halil Bedii Yönetken and Vahit Lüfti Salcı. For assistance given him in New York, he wishes to thank John Marshall, Associate Director in the Humanities Division of the Rockefeller Foundation; Genevieve Oswald, Curator of the Dance Collection of the New York Public Library, and the late Curt Sachs. For aid in securing illustrations, he is grateful to Irfan Donmez and the Turkish Press, Broadcasting and Tourist Department. All pictures not otherwise credited are from the author's collection.

Since Mr. And suggested that the names of dances be printed in Turkish, we offer the following clues to pronunciation:

'ı' is like the 'u' in 'support.'

'ö' is like a short 'e' spoken with puckered lips, or like the French 'eu' in 'feu.'

'ü' is like a short 'i' also spoken with puckered lips, or like the French 'u' in 'mur.'

'ç' and 'ş' are like the English 'ch' and 'sh.' 'c' is pronounced like the 'g' in 'gentle.'

'ğ' is sounded like 'y' when it occurs between soft vowels. Otherwise it is silent, but has the effect of lengthening the preceding vowel.

PROVINCES OF TURKEY

Anatolia is the peninsula of Asia Minor

INTRODUCTION

> "L'histoire des Turcs occidentaux est comme la clef de voûte où convergent et se rencontrent pendant quelques années les histoires particuliers de grandes nations qu'on regarde trop souvent comme isolées les unes des autres; elle nous rappelle que la continuité est la loi de l'univers et qu'il n'est pas d'anneau qu'on puisse se ignorer dans la chaîne dont toutes les parties sont solidaires." Édouard Chavannes. *Documents sur les Turcs occidentaux*. St. Petersburg, 1903.

The Turks came from Central Asia and settled in the Central Anatolian plateau. They were there for centuries before they gained possession of other parts of Anatolia, captured Istanbul and advanced into Europe, Africa and Asia to create an Empire. Their original religion was shamanism which still survives among some Central Asian nations. Later they accepted the faith of Islam.

The Anatolian peninsula, which the Turks have held for many centuries, is the bridge between Asia and Europe and many major migrants have travelled its path. Over a period of more than two thousand years it has been inhabited by representatives of various civilizations—Hittites, Greeks, Phrygians, Lydians, Isaurians, Cappodocians and Byzantines to mention only a few. Turkish culture is heir to the traditions of many civilizations and surely its dance has also assimilated their influences, though it is not always an easy task to trace them.

We know very little of Hittite dancing, for instance, but certain other cultural resemblances make us feel that there could be similitudes in the field of dance as well. Certain conical shaped hats of the Hittite time are worn by the inhabitants of the same area today. The long handled Hittite zither is a most popular instrument in present day Anatolia. Keeping these parallels in mind, we can look

at the Hittite relief (reproduced on page 7) representing a dancing girl with both arms raised above her shoulders and realize that we can find the same pose used by Turkish dancing girls who hold clappers in their hands.

Many dances of great antiquity have been preserved. One example is the "butcher's dance," originally of pyrrhic nature. There are records which show that it was danced by butchers in the Hippodrome in Istanbul, during the time of the Byzantine Empire. It was done after Easter and was very popular. In the eighteenth century Mme. de Chenier, the mother of the French poet, André Chenier, described witnessing this dance performed by a group of Macedonian butchers in the Istanbul Hippodrome (the name changed to At Meydanı).[1] She wrote that the dancers stood closely in a line, holding each other by their belts, performing the same steps and dancing like a single body. At the end of the chain two dancers detached themselves from the line, each holding a long knife in his hand. Fifteen other dancers were detached from the line, some holding knives, some whips, and she goes on describing the dance.

The pyrrhic character of the dance has been toned down and much has been changed. There is a great lack of information with regard to this dance under its Turkish name, borrowed from the Arabic *kasap,* meaning 'butcher' and its relation to the dance under the Greek adopted name *hassapikos* which is still extant and danced more at feasts. There is a variant still performed in Trakya, North West Anatolia, and the title is prefixed by the adjective, *eski,* 'old' or 'ancient,' *eski kasap.*

The second and the most important influence on Turkish dances is that of Central Asia with the shamanistic rituals of the Uralo-Altaic group from which the Turkish nation originated (the same origins are to be found in the Hungarian and Finnish cultures).[2] There are many instances today where the hidden traces of these most ancient ancestral rites can be observed. In the shamanistic ceremony, still performed it is believed in sections of Central Asia, the shaman, who has power of exorcising, is called *oyun* (a woman sha-

1. Mme. Louis de Chenier. *Lettres grecques.* Paris, 1879, p. 144.
2. For Hungarian shamanism, see Geza Roheim. "Hungarian Shamanism." *Psychoanalysis and the Social Sciences,* vol. III (1951), pp. 131-69. Also, Akos Szendrey. "Symbolic Dances in Hungarian Folklore." *Hungarian Quarterly,* vol. I, no. 1 (1936), pp. 124-35.

man is called *udahan*) and the ceremony itself which consists of dance, vocal and instrumental music, dramatic and mimetic action (as well as ventriloquism) and poetry is also called *oyun*. This is the same word as is used today, and throughout this essay, for 'dance,' 'play' and 'game' in Turkish. This threefold semantic idea also shows the relation of dramatic dances to children's games.

There is other linguistic evidence to show definite links between shamanistic rituals and the dances of Anatolian Turkey. Other words for shaman are in Mongol *buge,* in Buryat *buge* or *bö*. This word is clearly identical with the Turkish word *büyü* meaning 'magic.' Furthermore and most interesting is the old Turkish *büyi* (with several variants) meaning 'to dance.' The handle of the shaman's drum is called *bar* in Altai dialect. This is the word used for a group of dances still performed in Eastern Turkey in which the use of the drum is of major importance. An almost parallel line can be traced in the drumming dances of shamans' rituals and in Anatolia. (With-

Hittite musicians and dancer. The small figure is holding castanets (Hittite Museum, Ankara)

Drum dance of Kastamonu

out a drum, a shaman could not induce trance.) In Anatolia, especially in Kastamonu, men play a giant sized drum while dancing.

Concerning certain beliefs attached to the dances themselves, it is also safe to assume a relationship to the shamanistic idea of exorcising evil influences. For example, it is believed that whoever dances *delihoron,* a dance from Çoruh, Eastern Anatolia, will not perish for a good fifteen years. Another name for the same dance is *şeytan oyunu,* 'devil's dance.'

Remnants of ancient shamanistic ritual also survive in the religious and quasi-religious dances with regard to the musical instruments used and the purpose and movements of the dances, but this will be discussed later in the essay.

Central Asian influences, other than shamanistic, can be found in the dances of Anatolian Turkey. They can be seen in many choreographic patterns, movements, occasions, musical instruments and rhythms; for example, circle dances, whirling dances, constant crouching movements and use of spoons to mark the time. Of course there are many dances common to Turks living in Asia and in Anatolia,

for example the well known Caucassian *lesghinka* is also danced in Anatolia under the name of *lezki.*

The third influence on Turkish dancing is that of Islamic culture. It is largely negative, since the Islamic religion was antagonistic towards dance and, especially, introduced the taboo forbidding women to dance alongside men. This affected the urban people, who enjoyed hired professional dancers instead of their own dancing,[3] but not the Turkish peasantry, who retained their ethnic unity and their distinctive character along with their dancing. We should not forget that among the peasant dances there are quite a few for men and women who dance together.

This negative influence was also responsible for provoking a strong reaction and creating subversive deviations like the sectarian dances, which are explained in the next section of this essay. Although dance was considered altogether reprehensible by conservative Moslems, the Sufis, especially, who seek more direct contact with God, looked upon dance in a more tolerant way, and they cited occasions when dance is allowable. Among many celebrated Sufi disciples, al-Ghazzali, a remarkable theologian and lawyer, makes an apology for dancing under certain conditions in his book *Ihya 'Ulum ad-Din.*[4] He explains very ably that melodies which stir up gladness, joy and emotion, their manifestation through poetry, airs, dancing and movement are praiseworthy. He emphasizes that certain laws laid down by the Koran, regarding dancing, point out that time, place, social usages, one's ability and the circumstances should be taken into consideration when dancing takes place. He mentions the sanction of singing and dancing, the looking on at the dancing of the Abyssinians and the Prophet's permission to listen to music and song on festival days. He tells of what constitutes dancing, one instance when the Prophet found it allowable and two others when it was found praiseworthy, all together with the comment that, in the

3. A Moslem, who visited a Paris ballroom, asked: "When he is so rich, this gentleman gives himself the trouble to dance? Why doesn't he hire some one to do it for him?" Mentioned in *John L. Stoddard's Lectures.* Boston, 1905-06, vol. II, p. 84. Of course, this attitude has now completely vanished.
4. Duncan B. Macdonald. "Emotional Religion in Islam as affected by Music and Singing." Translation of a book of the "Ihya 'Ulum ad-Din" of al-Ghazzali. *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society,* 1901, pp. 195-252; 705-48.

opinion of the Prophet, dancing is never befitting to a notable person. He also discusses the attitude of mind of the dancer to the dancing, noting that only genuine ecstasy will make his movements light and brisk.

Fourthly there is the influence caused by Turkey's expansion into an Empire from the fifteenth to the nineteenth centuries, when it ruled over large parts of Europe, Asia and Africa, and provided a reciprocal cultural exchange with the people of the countries under its rule. Most notable is the Turkish influence on Balkan dancing. Many Balkan instruments not only have Turkish names but are exact replicas of Anatolian Turkish instruments. Apart from those to be described later, we can mention here the *gayda* (bagpipe) and *düdük* (whistle). As to the dances not only the movements, formations and rhythms are taken from Turkish dances but also the names. The *karşılama* (meaning 'facing') is danced in Greece under the same name, to give one example. The Turkish adjective *dik* meaning 'upright' is used in connection with certain Greek dances as it is used with Turkish dance names. *Çiftetelli* is another popular Turkish dance performed in Greece. Turkish influence through dance is felt as far as Hungary. Among many Turks it is even believed that the word 'czardas' comes from a Turkish-Persian word.[5] Of course there is also a Balkan influence upon Turkish dances, though it is slight. For examples, there are the imported Balkan dances like *sirto* and *hora* which are also enjoyed in Anatolia. They were mainly imported by Turkish emigrants who settled in Anatolia.

Elements of all these sources have blended and become integrated into something that today we call the dances of Anatolian Turkey. Anatolia itself is a place where many races and religions were intermingled. Yet a homogenous and coherent element, the Turkish peasantry, who are eighty per cent of the whole population, has retained its unique and distinctive character through centuries. And so have the peasant dances. The preservation of more than a thousand folk dances is due, in part, to the enforced independence of towns and villages. This regional isolation, which has preserved Turkish folk dances, also explains why even the most observant travellers seem to have been unaware of the existence of Turkish dances

5. See Károly Viski. *Hungarian Dances.* London, 1937, pp. 79, 85.

Sword dance from Urfa as performed at a folk dance festival

except the whirling dervishes and the dances which are a delight of the few like the dancing boys and dancing girls.

The Turks must also be blamed for having neglected their own dances. Now there is a tendency to put more emphasis on Turkish dances and there are students of folk dance like Muzaffer Sarısözen, Mahmut Rağıp Gazimihal, Ahmet Kutsi Tecer and Ferruh Arsunar among others. Turkish dances are not presented internationally yet, except at the festivals which have been organized during the past twenty-five years among the Balkan countries. The first time they were performed in an international setting was at the 1949 Venice Festival, organized by the International Folk Music Council, where the spectators were thrilled by the vigor and vitality of Turkish dancing.[6] Now in Turkey there is a well established foundation called *Türk Halk Oyunlarını Yaşatma Ve Yayma Tesisi* for the propogation and study of Turkish folk dances. It is financed by a well known

6. For the Balkan Festival, see Memduh M. Moran. "Dance in the Balkans." *Theatre Arts,* vol. XX, no. 4 (1936), pp. 289-95. For the Venice Festival, see *Journal of the International Folk Music Council,* vol. II (1950), pp. 1-8.

bank. The foundation has done much towards stimulating an interest in Turkish folk dances, trying to urbanize them by arranging free courses for the public, encouraging the local folk societies and collecting and preserving their notation in an archive. The foundation, with the exception of the past two years, has run an annual festival every summer at the modern amphitheatre in Istanbul. The festival, exhibiting the spirit of the people and the joy in life that they possess, has acquired the stature of a national event. At this time foreigners and city dwellers get an idea of the diversity of dances from the various regions, for in the festival programs an average of more than fifteen regions are represented.[7] There is also a growing tendency to include some dances of the Turks living outside Anatolia like the Crimean Turks, the Azerbaijanian Turks, the Caucasian Turks and the Turks from Turkestan.

Turks today have also enjoyed a new discovery, ballet. With the guidance of Dame Ninette de Valois a National Ballet School was founded in 1947, and the first graduates have already formed a small group which will become the nucleus of the Turkish National Ballet Company.

7. For an account of this festival, see Pierre Michaut. "Un Gala de Danses Folkloriques." *La Danse*, no. 5 (1954).

RELIGIOUS AND QUASI-RELIGIOUS DANCING

The austerity and rigidity of Islam did much to discourage music and dancing and waged a relentless war against them. Yet it did not succeed in eliminating dancing. The secular, traditional folk dancing survived. And the Sufi conception of the use of music and dancing, accepting both as part of the litany, gained success. From this latter conception sprang various monastic dervish orders, called *tarikat*. In their colleges, called *tekke,* they had many kinds of meditations, pious retirements, concentrations, prayers and fastings. Among the many esoteric Sufi sects Rufai, Nakşibendi, Mevlevi, Melami, Saadi, Kadiri and Bektaşi are well known. Not all of them have dancing in their religious exercises. *Devr,* literally meaning 'rotation,' usually consists of the dancers turning in a circle while holding each other. It is exercised by Kadiri, Rufai, Halvati, Bayrami, Gülşeni, and Uşşaki. In some other sects, like Nakşibendi, the members remain seated in a circle and make simultaneous movements. Some sects, like Bektaşi, are contemplative and some, like Hamzavi and Melami, are secret and their exercises may not be seen by outsiders.

The dancing of these sects was condemned by the orthodox Moslems and Ulema (meaning 'learned ones') sometimes on the ground of being sinful or sometimes as being unpraiseworthy. Sometimes the Ulema tried to suppress them on political grounds. All this is well explained by the Turkish scholar Kâtib Çelebi (1609-57):

> The orthodox Ulema have classed those whirlings as 'dancing,' and have pronounced it forbidden, branding as infidels those who hold it permissible. The Sufis begin by saying that the definition of dancing is not applicable to it. They continue thus: "The cyclic motion is a form of motion distinct from dancing and for the good of mankind. If it is permitted, there is no harm in it from the point of view of the public good." They adduce the examples of the Ethiopian dance and the whirling of 'Alī, and say: "The man who takes one side in a dogmatic dispute is not to be declared an infidel."
>
> The real purpose of the Ulema's prohibition is to protect the State, for in the past States have suffered much from

the Sufis: witness in particular the rise of the Safavids in Persia. Consequently there has been harshness and severity, with the resultant advantage, from the point of view of the State, that the spiritual ardour which tended to increase the number of disciples and to attract adherents has diminished.[8]

The most distinguished dervish order is Mevlevi, known as the 'whirling dervishes,' and founded in Konya by the great Turkish poet and mystic, Mevlana Celalettin Rumi. Konya, in central Anatolia, was the capital of the Selçuk Turks. The *devr* of Mevlevi took its name from Mevlana's son, Sultan Veled, Devre-i Velediyye. The attire of adepts consisted of a cloak called *cübbe* and a long white robe called *tennure* which was worn over a short tight-fitting jacket, open in front. Their cylindrical conical shaped hat was called *sikke*. Their leaders, or high ranking dervishes, had a turban around it called *destar*; their girdle was known as *eliflamet*.

Their ceremony, which was performed in their assembly hall called *semahane*, has often been described in the books of foreign observers.[9] It begins with the dervishes making obeisance to their leader

8. G. L. Lewis. *The Balance of Truth.* Translation of "Mizan ül-hakk fi ihtiyar-il-ahakk" by Kâtib Chelebi. London, 1957, pp. 42-3. Used by permission of The Macmillan Company.
9. An account dated 1613 describes a visit to a "Colledge of Turkish Monkes in Galata, that are called Darvises," where, after listening to much unpleasant and harsh singing and reading of the Mohammedan law, a gentleman at length viewed a ceremony "like those Trietericall Orgia that were performed by the furious Myrmalores the Priests of Bacchus." ". . . some five and twentie of the two and fiftie Darvises, suddainly rose up barelegged and bare-footed, and casting aside their upper Garment some of them having their brests all uncovered, they began by little and little to turne about the Interpreter of the Law turning gently in the middest of them all, afterward they redoubled their force and turned with such incredible swiftnesse, that I could not chuse but admire it. The forme of their dauncing is as strange as the continuance of their swiftness, for sometimes they stretch out their Armes as farre as they can in length, sometimes they contract them in a lesser compasse, sometimes they hold them about their Heads, sometimes againe they performe certaine merry gestures, as if they were drawing a Bow and shooting forth an Arrow. Likewise some of them did continue turning during the whole time in one and the selfe same place, and others more forward from one corner to another." Samuel Purchas. *Hakluytus Posthumus or Purchas His Pilgrimes Contayning a History of the World in Sea Voyages and Lande Travells by Englishmen and others.* Reprint of 1625 edition. Glasgow, 1905, vol. X, pp. 418-19.

According to a later account: "There is another sect of dervishes . . . These are the *Tacta Tepens* or board beaters . . . I had not an opportunity to be present at their *devout* exercises, which, I was told, require an exertion of the lungs equal to that of the limbs in the circular motions of the preceding sect. As, in performing these motions, the *Mewliachs* acquire a greater energy in proportion as the giddy intoxication increases, and whirl

Whirling dervish (Jean Baptiste van Moor. *Recueil de cent estampes representant differentes nations du Levant.* Paris, 1714)

round with more precipitancy, so the board beaters, following each other with great solemnity round their chapel, repeat aloud the word *Allah!* to the beat of a drum, until its strokes are at length quickened to such a degree, as to produce in many instances, by the streporous exertions with which they are followed, a spitting blood." William Wittman. *Travels in Turkey, Asia-Minor, Syria, and across the desert into Egypt, during the years 1799, 1800, and 1801, in company with the Turkish Army and the British Military Mission.* London, 1804, p. 73.

An early traveller, who was also an accomplished musician, compared the steps of the dervish dance to those of the Spanish *ciaccones. Viaggi di Pietro Della Valle . . .* Parte Prima cioe La Turchia. Rome, 1650-53, p. 104.

and receiving a blessing from him. At the start their arms are crossed and pressed against their breasts with their hands grasping their shoulders and their heads inclined. Their bare feet are close together. At first they turn very slowly, their hands leaving their shoulders, and gradually the arms of the dancers are extended full length and held horizontally. Sometimes the right hand is raised with the palm turned upwards, and the left lowered with the palm turned downwards. This posture is explained symbolically by saying that the influence from heaven, received by the upturned palm, is handed down to the world below by the other. Sometimes one arm is outstretched and the other pressed against the heart. The dervishes pirouette by resting on the heel of each foot in turn while the other maintains a rotary motion. Their eyes are downcast or closed and the head is slightly bent over one shoulder. As they gradually quicken their rotation, their long white skirts become fully expanded like opened umbrellas. The *semazen,* their leader, retains his cloak and does not join the *devr.* He gives a signal for its termination and the dancers all stop at the same time. Generally there are pauses between each *devr.* Their number is symbolic of the cyclic sequence of the seasons.

Dance of the Kadiri dervishes, showing the characteristic formation of two concentric circles (Ignatius d'Ohsson. *Tableau Général de l'Empire Othoman.* Paris, 1790)

The whirling itself symbolizes the celestial motions; as the earth turns on its axis as well as revolving round the sun, so the dervishes pivot on their feet while making a revolution of the hall, which is considered the hall of celestial sound.

The education of the Mevlevi noviatiate is very arduous and painstaking; it is called the "1001 days of penitence." The preparatory exercise for whirling consists mainly of adjusting the opening of two toes around a nail on the ground and spinning around this pivot. These nails can still be seen in Konya.

The exercises of the Rufai order, known among travellers from Europe as the 'howling dervishes,' are divided into five distinct ceremonies, comprising almost all those of the other orders. The dancers start by swaying themselves from side to side,[10] throwing their heads from shoulder to shoulder and placing their hands on various parts of their bodies, such as their faces, their breasts, their bellies and their knees. In the second stage they move their bodies forward and backward, then from side to side and then again back and forth. Their elbows are held against each other and they observe an exact rhythm. Later they shake themselves with jerking motions and as a next step they take off their turbans, form a circle arm in arm with shoulders pressed against each other, and make the round of the hall at a measured pace, alternately beating their feet on the floor in unison and springing up. Unlike Mevlevi they are an order of self castigation, licking fire, and piercing themselves after they have attained a high state of frenzy. Sometimes they make two concentric circles and the more enthusiastic ones take the inner circle.

After the declaration of the new Turkish Republic and the secularization of the state, the Turkish Government saw certain disadvantages in the continuation of sectarian religious exercises and

10. "In the same manner as the dance of the spheres in the Samothracian mysteries has been preserved to our days in the slow circle dance of the Mevlevi's in which each dervish moves round himself as a central point, and all move together round the sheikh who stands in the middle, so may we distinguish in the violent simultaneous movement backwards and forwards, and sideways, of the Rufai dervishes, the ancient . . . Persian dance of the Thesmaphorians. All the representations of Athenaeus and Pollux respecting them accord perfectly with the above description. The dancers sank down forwards, then raised themselves up again, representing the motion of the ox sinking and rising under its burthen." John Murray, ed. *A Handbook for Travellers in Turkey Describing Constantinople, European Turkey, Asia Minor, Armenia, and Mesopotamia.* London, 1854, pp. 120-121.

practices and these were abolished by law in 1926. By this law all the assembly halls were closed. In Istanbul alone there had been over two hundred of them. This law meant the end of organized whirling dervishes and other practices, though they may still be done privately. Another change occurred on December 17, 1954, the six hundred and eighty-first anniversary of the death of Mevlana, the founder of the Mevlevi order, when, for the first time in twenty-eight years, permission was granted for a performance of the whirling dervishes at Mevlana's tomb in Konya. This was filmed by the Turkish Press, Broadcasting and Tourist Department, a valuable record. There has been an annual performance every year since then on the 17th of December.[11]

Parallel to this religious dancing there are the quasi-religious folk dances of the villages. These belong to certain Anatolian sects which sprang from Şii (a sect also called Alevi) in conflict with the other main wing, Sünni, which is more orthodox in certain matters. Some of these sects consist of nomadic tribes under various names like Abdal, Tahtacı and Kızılbaş. They hold indoor parties at which they have mixed dancing called *semah, samah* or *zamah.* All these are variations of the common Arabic word *sema.*

These are jealously guarded dances which are performed at secret indoor meetings, inpenetrable by the uninitiated. This is not due to any need or desire for secrecy but simply because they are despised people by other Moslems in the neighborhood and they find it unsafe to have their meetings in the open. They do not intermarry with any other sect and their cultural unity influenced and preserved their dancing. Thanks to the efforts of the late Vahit Lütfi Salcı, a great

11. The Ankara correspondent of the London *Times* described last year's ceremony and commented: "The present annual ceremony on Mevlana's festival was revived by the Government . . . as a concession to the religious revival —or reaction, as some modern Turks would call it—which is so notable a feature of Turkey today. Even under the official patronage of the Ministry of Education, the spectacle is outstandingly strange and beautiful—a last touch in a way of the gorgeous and fast-vanishing east. How far dervish practices in Turkey continue in secret is not certain. One of the most interesting features of Turkish life today is the way in which religion bubbles and seethes below the fabric of the secular state. Turkey, for so many centuries the sword of Islam against Christian Europe, has perhaps never become completely used to being a secular state. The Mevlana festival at Konya draws great crowds and arouses much fervent feeling. It is perhaps a safety valve which helps to resolve the tension between an ardent Muslem people and their westernised leaders." "The Whirling Dervishes of Konya." *The London Times,* November 30, 1958.

Dance of the Mevlevi dervishes (Ignatius d'Ohsson. *Tableau Général de l'Empire Othoman.* Paris, 1790)

Turkish folklorist, who was able to observe their secret meetings and was able to see their dancing, we learn much of their dancing and polyphonic music. There have been foreign observers, as well, giving other second hand accounts of their dancing. In the following account by the Rev. G. E. White, once Dean of Anatolia College, the priest and religious leader of the sect is called *dede*:

> Once or twice a year, most regularly in the autumn, the *dedes* make a circuit of their parishes, and this is a great event for the villagers. Their most highly prized services are held on this occasion and with great secrecy. Guards are posted, sometimes in a triple line, around the village, around the house, and at the door of the building. The place of meeting is a common house; the time, always after nightfall. Eyewitnesses and participants in the worship say that a table is set with sacrificial or sacramental food and wine, of which the congregation partake. Then the *dede* preaches beautifully, inculcating the common virtues, teaching their peculiar observances, and emphasising the common bonds that link all the communities together. Prayers are offered, in which every person present is remembered, and even every article of furniture in

the room has its share. For instance, one person brings forward the lamp, a prayer appropriate to it is offered, and then the attendants set it back on its shelf. Then a religious dance takes place, the men and the mature women present going through some form of motion in time together. Such performances would naturally be viewed as scandalous, or at best as very suspicious, in the East, and these gatherings are roundly denounced as indecent by sober-minded citizens.[12]

This dancing, in spite of its spiritual awareness and sacred air, usually takes a worldly turn. No doubt these mixed dances have some reference to the suppression and sublimation of desires. By dancing the people give evidence of their reaction against the disapproval of Islam. Their exercises very exactly parallel those of the 'jumpers' and 'shakers.' The assembly room is a large rectangular hall. In the middle is the leader, *mürşid,* and on both sides of him and facing him are the choir, chanting their religious hymns and poems. These indoor parties are called *cem bezmi* and *muhabbet* and the dance is called *sema* (or *semah, samah or zamah*) and is performed by two to sixteen dancers. When a dancer is tired, if a man, he goes to a man and if a woman, to a woman. He kisses his replacement on the knees; this is called *niyaz.* Opposite sexes invite each other to dance by an embracing gesture or by kissing hands. In some districts there is a kind of master of ceremonies, called *gözcü* or *gözlekci,* with a stick in his hand called *dayak,* who invites both men and women, who sit on opposite sides of the room, to dance. The person invited then replaces the previous dancer. In *sema* dancers never hold hands but they face each other. The dancers stretch forward their hands to each other and cross them across their chests. Women's arm movements are more restrained than the men's, for they never raise their arms higher than their shoulders. They move by pointing the toes with small foot movements. There is a sacred place in the hall called *çeragtahtı* where candles are burnt. When a dancer passes this place, he must not turn his back on it, he must face it with his hands crossed on his chest and bow his head. *Semas* are usually performed in quadrille formation, the dancers facing each other in rows. The dancers shuffle back and forth, breaking through each other in counter formation. *Semas* usually consist of at least

12. G. E. White. "The Shia Turks." *Journal of the Transactions of the Victoria Institute,* vol. XL, p. 231.

two parts: *ağırlama,* a slow movement in which men and women mirror each other's hand and arm movements, and *yeldirme,* (or *yellendirme, yürütme* or *yeğinleme*) a quick movement in which whirling is a striking feature. Usually the latter has a rhythm of five and the dancers repeat *"Yah Şah!" "Yah Şah!"* There are also hand clappings. Many *semas* bear a close resemblance to the folk dances of the same region.

Recently Ahmet Kutsi Tecer, a great student of Turkish dance and folklore, discovered in an old book a small manuscript of the fifteenth century (MS. Ankara Maarif Kitaplığı No. 320). This manuscript revealed a symbolic explanation of ancient Turkish religious dances and, in fact, has reinforced, with literary proof, views and explanations which we had already formed from a study of the dances themselves.

The author of the old manuscript traces the development of dance from its spiritual birth at the creation of the world. He states that dance was born from the twelve tonalities of music and this birth gave expression to four different types of dancing—*çarh, rakıs, muallak* and *pertav.*

Çarh is a Persian word meaning 'wheel' or 'revolving object,' and the dances of this group are of a whirling and circling nature.

Rakıs, generally meaning 'dance,' in this context is used to mean more specifically movement of the arms, hands, legs and head with the trunk of the body remaining static.

Muallak, Arabic meaning 'hanging object,' depicts leaping and jumping, classified as the vertical movements.

Pertav, another Persian word meaning 'physical forward projection,' covers the group of dances of horizontal movement.

The author goes on to link the physical movement of the body in dance with the spiritual experience of the dance itself. It is here that he mentions the word *sema.* The connotations of this word are interesting, for its meaning is twofold. In the first place, the word means 'listening to music,' but it has another meaning, namely 'the heavens.' It is obvious how the idea of listening, dancing and spiritual experience became intermingled.

Indeed the religious side of the people's life was closely linked to the dance, for the religious leader and the leader of the dance *sema* were the same person. The room in which this dance was performed symbolized the year, the leader himself represented the sun,

the life giver of the earth, and the dancers turned around him like the stars and moon, in the *çarh, rakıs, muallak* and *pertav*. These symbolized the four seasons, which are born of the twelve months, represented, no doubt, by the twelve tonalities of music from which the four dances were born. The circling movements of the *çarh* represented the evolution of winter into spring. The characteristics of the *çarh* were similar to the characteristics of the change brought about on earth by spring. The limb movements of the *rakıs* represented the tranquility and life giving qualities of summer, the movements themselves bearing a close resemblance and affinity to the movements of leaves and petals. The *muallak* depicted autumn. Its leaping vertical movements express the feeling of heavy ripeness, maturity and thanksgiving to be found in this season. *Pertav* represented winter, by its forward movements symbolizing the fallen leaves, the dead flowers, the drooping trees and the barrenness of the season.

The four dances, too, were linked not only to the four seasons but also to the four elements. When the dances were performed, there was a relationship between the inner spiritual ecstasy and the physical movement. This relationship gave symbolic roots to the relationship of the dance and the four elements of which the human body was said to be comprised.

The next logical step in the author's argument, having related the dance to the four elements comprising the human body, is to relate them to the four ages of man. The span of life is given as eighty years and the *çarh* represented the first twenty years of life, the bubbling movements of childhood and youth. The *rakıs* represented the years of development and virility, gayer and livelier. The *muallak* symbolized the years of maturity and wisdom whilst the *pertav* showed the decline into old age.[13]

In every context the dances must be performed in their logical sequence, for they have the characteristics of a suite.

In his conclusion the writer states that the *sema* was unpraiseworthy to anyone who was ignorant of its symbolism and meaning. In the second section of his book, which is beyond the scope of this essay, the author gives a defense of *sema*.

13. For a list of these Four-Fold Things, like perfume, zodiac, time of day, color, etc., in connection with music, see Henry George Farmer. *Sa'adyah Gaon on the Influence of Music*. London, 1943, p. 9.

Sultan watching a dancing girl and a whirling dervish. Miniature (Topkapı Sarayı Museum, Istanbul. Album Murat III, No. 1344; sixteenth century)

DANCING BOYS AND DANCING GIRLS

The dancing girls and dancing boys are a recognized institution throughout the Near East. They are the professional entertainers, hired for exhibition dancing, and their counterparts could be found in many countries. The dancing and singing boys have their counterparts in the *shelluh* or *chettah* of North Africa, the *batchas* of Central Asia, and the *gink, matrib, mukkannath* and *khawals* of Mesopotamia and Egypt. Counterparts for the dancing girls are more numerous—*alimahs* and *gawasees* in Egypt, *ouled nail* and *chattaha* girls from North Africa, *nautch* girls in India, *geisha* girls in Japan, *hula* dancers from the Pacific Islands and even the chorus girls of Broadway shows can be listed as dancing girl counterparts.

Turkish sources offer little information with regard to dancing boys and dancing girls. This is because dancing was regarded by many writers of the past as an improper and wicked sport, especially when indulged in by professional women and boys. On the other hand, foreign travellers have given much attention to this topic in their books and, although they emphasize the slack morality and obscene character of the dancing, they cannot hide from their descriptions the breathless interest that they took in these performances.

The Turkish name for both dancing boys and girls is *çengi*. The etymology of this word is a bit doubtful but it could be derived from the word *çenk* (pronounced 'chang') which is an upperchested harp (sometimes known as a Jew's Harp), an old instrument sometimes used, along with cymbals, to accompany dancing. Another explanation of the origin of the word derives from its similarity in sound to the word *çingene*, meaning 'gypsy.' This theory is strengthened when it is remembered that the majority of the dancing boys and girls were, in fact, Gypsies. There is also a Gypsy word *chang* or *chank* (plural *changa*), which means 'leg.' Gypsy *changhala* means 'quick.' Another theory, which is not valid, however, is that *çengi* comes from the old

word *cinaedi,* the forerunners of the dancing boys. Although the word *çengi* is used for both male and female dancers, there are two other words for dancing boys, one is *köçek.* The accompaniment is called *köçekçe.* The other is *tavşan* (Turkish for 'rabbit'), with the accompaniment, *tavşanca.* The dancing boys got this last name because they used to make grimaces, facial contortions and generally move the muscles and skin of their faces like a rabbit.

The dancing boys and girls performed for the amusement of the onlookers and they came from different 'guilds' and companies called *kol.* (See Appendix.) They were mostly in vogue in old Istanbul, even at the seraglio level, and their quarter was Tahtakale. Today, slowly but surely, they are waning in popularity. Now Sulukule is their quarter and they are but Gypsies and, of their dancing, what is left is *çiftetelli,* improvised dancing. Dancing boys, *köçek,* can be found in villages in Anatolia; professional or amateur, they are used for amusement and entertainment at wedding ceremonies. Generally, in the dancing, both the boys and girls mark time with finger snapping or with some instrument, such as short tiny sticks, clappers, wooden spoons or small metal finger cymbals. This is a striking peculiarity of these dances. One method of finger snapping is to hold the hands above the head with palms together and click the fingers of both

Dancing girls. Miniature (Topkapı Sarayı Museum, Istanbul. Album Murat III, No. 1344; sixteenth century)

Dancing boy (*tavşan*) (Ignatius d'Ohsson. *Tableau Général de l'Empire Othoman.* Paris, 1790)

hands against each other. This is sometimes accompanied by a horizontal gliding of the neck, which resembles an East Indian dance movement.

A French traveller found that the dancing boys attached to the sultan's seraglio practiced their art from 3 P.M. until evening accompanied by the sultan's musicians. The dancers, called *rakkas,* played on drums, fifes and castanets, known as *dayrah, lemmis* and *tschalparah.*[14] A well known folklorist has provided a glimpse at the training of the dancing boys according to the practice of a famous coach, Bostan Bükülu Kemaneci Ahmet. To prevent the dancers' becoming giddy while performing turns, he placed his pupils in large baskets, hung from the ceiling, and revolved the baskets with great speed.[15]

The dancing boys, or *köçek,* are young boys whose dances and external appearance suggest femininity. Sometimes they grow their

14. Description du Sérail du Grand Seigneur par M. Girardin, ambassadeur de France à la Porte (1686). MS. Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, n.a. 4997, folio 176-177.
15. Sadi Yaver Ataman. *Safranbolu Düğünleri.* Bartın: Memleket Basımevi, 1936, p. 55.

hair long and decorate their locks with ornaments and wear conical pointed hats. Sometimes they dress like girls. Their dancing consists of leisurely walks, keeping time with clappers or finger snapping, short mincing steps, slow movements, suggestive gestures, sometimes somersaulting, wrestling, rolling upon the ground and other such games and mimicry. Certain names of their dances have been preserved—*kaytan oyunu, tura oyunu, fes oyunu.* The boys dance as long as they preserve their good looks and can conceal their beards. In some Anatolian provinces, even today, they become drummers to other dancing boys when they lose their looks and their beards grow. An early English traveller wrote of their dancing:

> The best were clothed very rich, either cloth of gold, silver, or rich silk. They had on a *just a corp,* as we say, coming to mid thigh, close button'd at the hands, and girt about them with rich girdles as their purse and fancy led them; under it (over the rest of their cloth's) they had a petticoat, which was very large and hang'd very full, down to their ankles; this was very rich, and of some pretty light merry colour. . . . Their heads are not shaven quite close, but very lovely locks are left round, which at other times they wear up close, and are unseen; but now they let them down, and set them out to best advantage, sometimes disshevel'd all about their shoulders, sometimes braided and hanging at their back. They commonly wore over their hair a plain cap of silk (small or scull fashion'd) or (which is more gentele) a fur'd sort of cap, cal'd here a *culpáck.* There was a delicate lovely boy, of about ten yeares old, had as comely head of hair, long as most women. With him danc't a lusty handsome man (about 25), both Turkes. They acceded all the roguish lascivious postures conceivable with that strange ingenuity of silent ribaldry, as I protest I believe Sardanopalus and all the effeminate courts of the East never came near them. . . . The rest danc't 4, 6, sometimes 8 in a company. It consists most in wriggling the body (a confounded wanton posture, and speakes as much of the Eastern treachery as dumb signs can), slipping their steps round gently; setting and turning. Never is there arming, or any figure, or handling. . . . They allwayes come before the person (where they dance) running (as all other that have occasion to passe and re-passe, unlesse in the bringing of presents or the like solemnity); then they fall either into a semicircle or whole round, and so continue falling out of one tune and humour into another, till at last with a merry wherry of their musick, they turn round (as the Dervises) a long time,

and so stopping they bow, and away run to their musick, which are always hard by.[16]

However, they were not Turks. Another English traveller, more modern, gives the following account:

> That part of the entertainment which is most to the fancy of the company, and which no Englishman would patiently contemplate for a moment, is the exhibition of the Yamakis, or dancing boys, who are chiefly insular Greeks or Jews, but never Turks.[17]

This statement is confirmed by Lady Augusta Hamilton:

> . . . young men, born in the Greek islands of the Archipelago, exercise the infamous profession of public dancers, and the Turkish women of this description, as Denon has observed in his travels in Egypt, are more studious to exhibit obscene attitudes than the variety and grace of their steps.[18]

She also gives a description of the place where they used to perform:

> The most esteemed taverns are those of Galata and Pera, which are filled with the better sort of Turks every Friday. There being no divans held on that day for the decision of causes, doctors of the law, moulahs, and emirs with their green turbans, resort to them, and pass the whole day in eating, drinking, and other amusements. . . . In most of them are little companies, of five or six singing and dancing boys; two of them play on some instruments, the others dance and sing: they are dressed like girls, and accompany words adapted to the purpose, with wanton looks and gestures, which will often so please their employers, that they will almost cover the boys' faces with ducats, sticking them on with their spittle; and the boys, in their turn, have the dexterity, in the course of the dance, to slide them almost imperceptibly into their pockets.[19]

An early nineteenth century traveller also wrote an account of the dancing boys of Turkey. He saw a performance given by four

16. James T. Bent, ed. "Dr. John Covel's Diary (1670-1679)." *Early Voyages and Travels in the Levant.* London, 1893, pp. 213-14.
17. J. C. Hobhouse. *A Journey through Albania and other provinces of Turkey in Europe and Asia, to Constantinople, during the Years 1809 and 1810.* London, 1813, p. 885.
18. Lady Augusta Hamilton. *Marriage Rites, Customs, and Ceremonies of all Nations of the Universe.* London, 1822, p. 43.
19. *Ibid.,* p. 49.

Dancing boys dressed as women. The performer at the extreme right is twirling and balancing majolica plates on his fingers while dancing. The others hold clappers for marking time. Sixteenth century (Bilder aus dem Türkischen Volksleben, Oesterreichische National-Bibliothek)

young boys, thirteen to seventeen years of age, and two older ones, who acted as clowns. The youngest, he describes as dressed in the costumes of Turkish women and wearing large sashes clasped with plates of metal. The clowns were dressed as men, and one wore rags. The subject of the dance was the manners and intrigues of Turkish women, and he thought the boys marvelous in their mimicry, especially when they sang in raucous female voices. The better dressed of the clowns represented a lover with whom the women arranged a secret rendez-vous after escaping from their husbands. The poorly dressed clown was the rejected lover, who was mocked by the others. The favored lover led the women in a circle dance during which he made lascivious movements. At times, the musicians, after a sudden, loud blast, left their places and joined the dancers. All this was accompanied by the playing of castanets and of small metal bells, which hung from the boys' sashes.

These boys, the author remarked, included Armenians and Jews, but most of them were Greeks. Turks would not enter such a degraded profession. He ascertained that there were some 600 danc-

Dancing girl with finger cymbals (William Alexander. *The Costume of Turkey.* London, 1802)

ing boys in the taverns of Constantinople. He remarked that many of them were performers of great virtuosity.[20]

The dancing boys were so loved and praised by their audiences that many poets sang their praises in verse. They praised their physical beauty as well as their skill in their art. One of the most notable among them was a famous poet, Enderunlu Fazıl Vehbi. His *Defteri Aşk,* meaning 'Book of Love,' contains 170 couplets praising the beauty and skill of the celebrated eighteenth century dancing boy, Çingene Ismail. His *Çenginame,* a book about the famous dancing boys of the nineteenth century, gives the names and stage names of forty-five performers, among them Altıntop (Golden Ball), Tazefidan (Fresh Sapling), Kanarya (Canary), Yeni Dünya (New World), Kıvırcık (Curly) and Tilki (Fox). The most famous nineteenth century çengis were Tosun Paşa Kızı Ceziye, Hancı Kızı Zehra and Küçükpazarlı Naile.

In the taverns the people became so intense in their appreciation of the dances that, not infrequently, they were carried away into an ecstasy of obscene and blasphemous words, yells and shouts, glass breaking, sword and dagger brandishing, and even quarrels among themselves. The popularity of the dancing boys led to so much

20. J. L. S. Bartholdy. *Voyages en Gréce fait dans les anneés 1803 et 1804,* Traduit de l'Allemand par A. du C. Paris, 1807, vol. II, pp. 80-89.

trouble and quarrelling among the Janissaries that, finally, to preserve order in his army, Sultan Mahmud forbade their appearance. Many of them fled to Egypt where they were employed by the Khedive Mehmet Ali Pasha and where their music was notated. Over three hundred tunes used for their dancing were written down and later given as a gift to a visiting Sultan, Adbülaziz.

As to the dancing girls they were very popular and were a delight to the male spectators. Their dancing consisted of suggestive contortions, a good deal of stomach play and twisting of the body, falling upon the knees with the trunk held back until the head nearly touched the floor (a position which usually encouraged the enthusiastic spectator to put a coin on the forehead), writhing, swaying the body with a side twist. Every muscle and both shoulders were made to quiver, and all this was alternated with postures of mincing grace and affectation. Sometimes they would perform a pantomime of physical love with an expression of restrained passion; retiring as if alarmed or humiliated and sometimes taking bold and daring attitudes, pretending to throw their breasts or lips to the spectators. Various travellers wrote of the dancing girls.[21] Among the most interesting accounts is the following extract from the letters of an English lady observer:

> The tunes are extremely gay and lively, yet with something in them wonderfully soft. The steps are varied according to the pleasure of her that leads the dance, but always in exact time, and infinitely more agreable than any of our dances, at least in my opinion.[22]

In another letter she wrote:

> Her fair maids were ranged below the Sofa, to the number of twenty, and put me in mind of the pictures of the ancient nymphs. I did not think all nature could have furnished such

21. See Charles MacFarlane. *Constantinople in 1828.* London, 1829, vol. I, p. 235. Ignatius [Mouradja] d'Ohsson. *Tableau Général de l'Empire Othoman divisé en deux parties dont l'une comprend la Legislation Mahométane l'autre l'Historie de l'Empire Othoman.* Paris, 1790, vol. II, pp. 233-35. Jean de Thevenot. *Relation d'un voyage fait au Levant.* Paris, 1665, p. 67. Jean Baptiste van Moor. *Recueil de cent estampes representant differentes nations du Levant, tirées sur les tableaux peints d'après nature en 1707 et 1708.* Paris, 1714, plates LIV, LV.
22. *Letters of the Right Honourable Lady M[ar]y W[ortle]y M[ontagu]e Written during her Travels in Europe, Asia and Africa.* London, 1767, p. 129.

a scene of beauty. She made them a sign to play and dance. Four of them immediately begun to play some soft airs on instruments, between a lute and guitar, which they accompanied with their voices, while the others danced by turns. This dance was very different from what I had seen before. Nothing could be more artful, or more proper to raise *certain Ideas.* The tunes so soft!—The motions so languishing!—accompanied with pauses and dying eyes! half-falling back and then recovering themselves in so artful a manner, that I am very positive, the coldest and most rigid prude upon earth, could not have looked upon them without thinking of *something not to be spoken of.*[23]

We read in an old account by Carlo Zeno Vicebailo that, during the year 1524, the Italian community in Istanbul held a carnival banquet where nearly three hundred people were present, including many important personages, Turkish and foreign. The banquet lasted a considerable time, and entertainment was provided by a ballet performance and by some Turkish dancing girls. In the ballet two well dressed old men keep a young girl prisoner. By mime she expresses that she is their captive and kept away from the beauties and pleasure of life. Shepherds are also in attendance. Four people sing sad songs and the girl does a dance during the course of which her clothes fall off; her golden hair falls about her and she is naked. The Turkish dancing girls provided entertainment also. A few beautiful young girls (*zenghi* or *zengi*) came into the middle of the banquet place and sang and danced. The dance was performed with movements of the head, arms and lips, whilst they threw their long hair back and forth, keeping time with clappers (*bossi*) in their hands. Later they danced the *moreschi* with all its leapings and jumpings. Their dresses were worn so tight that the lines of their bodies could be seen, and their movements were so lascivious and lecherous as to "melt a stone."[24]

23. *Ibid.*, pp. 155-6.

24. *Feste Date Da Toscani e Veneziani in Costantinopoli Nel Carnovale 1524 Narrate Da Carlo Zeno Vicebailo a Jacopo Corner in lettera del 17 Febbraio.* Venice. 1882. During this century, both *morisque* and *mattazina* (or *matachino* or the *buffens*) were popular in Turkey. The latter was a popular court dance in Italy. For performances of these dances in Turkey, see Johannes Lewenklaw. *Neuwe Chronica Türkischer Nation.* . . . Frankfurt am Main, 1590, pp. 473, 475, 499.

THEATRICAL DANCING

Dancing plays an important part in the Turkish rustic farces, many of which have a death and resurrection theme like the reawakening of the year. On winter solstice young people, dressed in skins to represent camels, foxes and other animals, go from house to house to the accompaniment of pipe and drum. The camel and the fox have sheep bells on their necks. At each house they visit, they are offered food. Later they gather in a house where they hang flaming torches on the door and eat all the food they have collected. Then they celebrate the occasion with various dances and plays.

Among these rustic farces the one called *Arap* (Negro) is very popular and has varying versions in different regions. This play has three essential characters apart from the fox and camel. The first actor is called Arap, the Negro, and his face and hands are blackened with soot. His chest and back are stuffed to make a double hump, and he has a headgear made of sheepskin. He holds a stick or rifle in his hand. The second character is the bridegroom. He is an old man with a long white beard and wears a headgear made of white skin, with which material his shoulders are also covered. The third person is the bride and she is invariably played by a young man dressed in a girl's clothes. The Negro is the camel driver and the bride rides while the husband follows. As they pretend to journey they perform a dance, usually a *halay*. Arap annoys the bride; the bridegroom becomes jealous and would intervene but the bride tries to calm them both. A lively quarrel ensues, however, which ends in the death of the old husband. He is duly mourned for by the bride and by spectators. The bride sings lamentations called *mersiye*. Spectators put fruits in the dead man's mouth and these fruits bring him to life. His resurrection is duly celebrated by a dance.

Rustic farces with a similar plot and characters are performed in Balkan countries, especially in Thrace, where there is a large Turkish population. These representations are believed to be survivals of Dionysiac festivals.

It is really impossible to segregate Turkish theatre and dance. In the traditional Turkish theatre of a hundred years ago, we have

enough evidence to show that dance, music and theatre were of equal importance in the spectacle. But before discussing this earlier theatre it would be best to give a description of the traditional theatre which remains to us today. For, in this theatre, we can see traces of the respective values and importance of music and dance. First let us look at the *orta oyunu* or 'middle play,' better explained by its other name, *meydan oyunu,* meaning 'public square play.' As indicated by these titles *orta oyunu* is a spectacle usually performed in the middle of a square.

It bears some resemblance in action and characters to the Italian Commedia dell'arte and the classic mime is seen in the principal feature of the *orta oyunu, taklid* or 'mimicry.' In the plays the characters represent various peoples inhabiting Turkey and attempt to imitate their dialects whilst depicting their occupations and professions on the stage. This is known as *taklid* and we see its connection with classic mime.

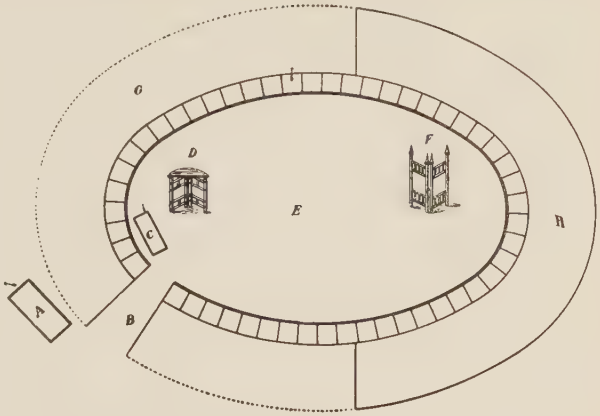
In Turkey during the first quarter of this century, there were two types of *orta oyunu, zuhuri kolu* (for special occasions) and *han kolu* (ordinary performances). The plays nearly always took place in the open air but recently they have been performed in theatres or coffee houses.

Authentically the *orta oyunu* theatre consists of an oval or quadrangular stage, thirty yards long, twenty yards wide. The stage was roped off from the public and had one entrance opposite which, before the time of emancipation, the women of the audience sat hidden by a veil. The floor of the stage was earth and the public sat on benches or small chairs. Two objects always occupy the same fixed place on the stage—near the entrance stands a chair or low screen representing a shop and at the opposite side of the stage is a reasonably high two winged screen. On these wings are glued pieces of paper on which is painted whatever the screen is meant to represent. Apart from these two things the stage is empty.

Outside the stage and near the entrance is the orchestra. The orchestra may consist of only two people, one playing a *zurna,* the other a double drum or *çifte nara.* Sometimes the orchestra will include a lute, a violin, a dulcimer, a *saz* and other instruments. The orchestra gives the cue for the entry of each principal character, who introduces himself on the stage with a small sequence of dances or a song. These are specially designed to help him reveal his identity.

Plan of the *orta oyunu* theatre (Ignaz Kunos. "Türkisches Volksschauspiel, Orta Ojnu." *Keleti Szemle,* vol. VIII, 1907)

A. costume closet
B. actors' entrance
C. orchestra
D. shop
E. acting area
F. screen
G. men spectators
H. women spectators



The audience was arranged in rows: the first seated, the second kneeling, the third and fourth standing and the fifth standing on benches.

For example, the character Pişekar makes his entry with a special tune called *ayak havası.* This tune consists of a marching rhythm specified by the onamatopoeic words *"düm tek te düm tek."*

The cast of the plays is not very big, and the characters are stereotyped. The leading character is named Pişekar, 'clever man' or 'conjurer.' He opens the play and rarely leaves the stage; when he has nothing to do, he sits among the spectators. He wears bright clothes—red trousers, a yellow gown and a many-colored night cap. He carries a cudgel with which he sometimes hits the other protagonists. The other prominent character is called Kavuklu, 'with a large wadded headgear,' and he is a comic character, usually a trader or servant in the plays. The dialogues between these two characters form an essential part of these plays, though their speech is only vaguely related to the action. Among the supporting characters the most important is Zenne or 'woman' (all women's roles in the traditional Turkish theatre were taken by men). One actor plays many parts, changing his costume with his character.

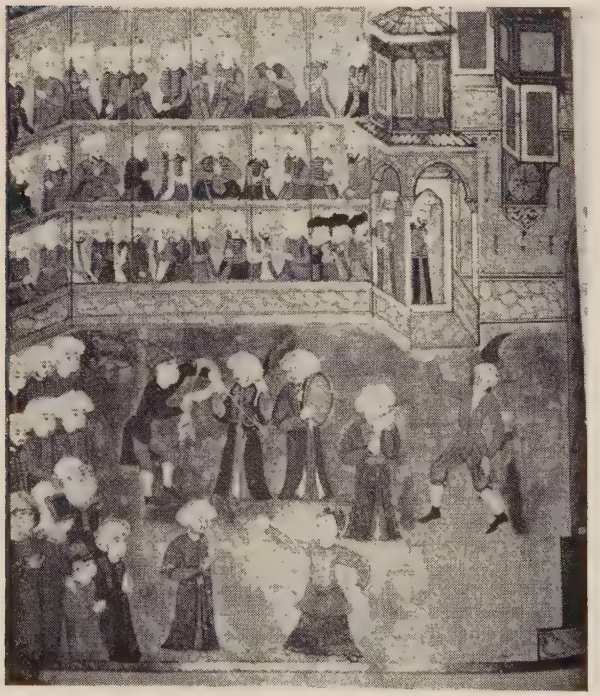
Each play consists of two parallel divisions. One part is the dialogues between Pişekar and Kavuklu, the other section is the proper subject of the play in which all the actors appear and represent the various types of people by the *taklid.*

Before the play begins all the actors, except the three principals, enter. They wear large paper hats, and dance, keeping time to the

music of the orchestra. When they sweep around the stage and depart, Pişekar appears and announces the play.

The orchestra plays something similar to an overture, and the first of the dialogues begins. The play continues without interruption. The only rest the actors get is when the orchestra plays, but even then they have to beat time to the music with their feet. The actors stand opposite each other as they speak and move about so that all can see and hear. An actor walks off the stage when he finishes one of his roles.

The Turkish puppet theatre, *Karagöz* (Black Eyes), has been one of the greatest delights of the Turkish people. The theatre is called *hayal zıl,* or 'shadow show,' and is usually performed indoors. A space is marked off by a fence and raised above the level of the onlookers, and the two or three men comprising the orchestra sit in front of this. Before the show begins, they shake rattles or beat drums, and during the performance they provide any required accompaniment by playing on reed flutes. They are called *yardakçı,* the as-



Dancers and musicians. Miniature (Topkapı Sarayı Museum, Istanbul. Album Murat III, No. 1344; sixteenth century)

sistants of the *hayalci,* the manipulator of the puppets. He is responsible for moving all the puppets by means of a stick at right angles to the screen, speaking their roles and singing songs and creating sound effects. The shadow effect is created by lamps in front of the *hayalci* and behind the puppets, that throw their shadows on a white screen. The puppets themselves are made in many sections so that they can move the parts of their bodies freely and even be made to dance.

The principal characters are Karagöz, who can be of any profession or trade, and Hacıvat, the Pişekar of the *orta oyunu.* The greater part of the play consists of dialogues between these two. They are supported by a variety of characters including a woman, a wealthy Turk, a lady of high rank, a drunkard and an opium eater. Karagöz represents the common Turkish people and his dialogues with Hacıvat mainly ridicule that character, who represents the affected, false elegant, pretentious Turk. The minor characters are caricatures of race, profession, nationality and human defect.

To begin the play Hacıvat appears and sings accompanied by the orchestra. He recites a moral prologue and then Karagöz appears, and the first of their dialogues begins. The plays, which completely lack continuity, depict various ways in which Hacıvat and Karagöz attempt to get money from the various characters. The appearance of each puppet is usually followed by the singing of songs. This theatre is, indeed, very productive in the field of music, for each motif has a special tune and each melody relates to a certain puppet.

The earliest Turkish theatre began in the streets. It moved indoors but it came out again to become the *orta oyunu,* which we have already described.

The three hour spectacle called *oyun kolu* consisted of a musical section with various instruments, songs and melodies; this was followed by the dancing section and lastly came the section devoted to poetry reading, joke telling, mimicry and anything connected with speech entertainment. The performance was concluded by prayers of thanksgiving.

The dance section, which is called *raks faslı,* consisted of the dancing boys and girls and the *curcuna,* which was done by the whole company, called *kol.* (See Appendix.)

In an earlier account we read of a clown, Nekre, buffooning and being the dominant personality whilst twelve dancers were perform-

ing. The *curcuna* dancers wore pointed fool's caps and grotesque costumes. No doubt Nekre, with his pointed fool's cap and with his clapper in his hand, was the forerunner of Pişekar who appears later in the *orta oyunu* as regisseur and master of ceremonies, as well as principal character.

There were also other grotesque dances performed by *kols*, wearing masks on their faces, and among many other things they imitated animals.[25] In an early account we read:

> . . . after they have done their work appointed them, thei do imploy that smal time of the rest of the day, to make pastime unto the people for to get some money, making an assembly throughout the streets, with a great baggepype made of goates skinne, . . . and with a sound thereof they daunce certayne daunces, with such a nimblenesse of the body and legges, that the pleasure thereof is not small unto the beholders. And after they have well daunced and leaped, they have some small pecces of money given unto them which is their onely advauntage and sustenation of their poverty.
>
> They have besides another meane and practice to gette something by, in making an assembly of sixe or seven of them in a company, disguysing themselves with certaine masquerie, as with heades and Crane neckes, and other most antike soule and straungest in the world . . .[26]

The essential characteristic of Turkish theatre, a characteristic which seems to satisfy the Turkish appetite, is the fusion of music, dance and drama, a *théâtre de revue,* and, even today, a Turkish audience will take great delight in a show which presents all of these.

25. For the Persian counterpart of grotesque dancing, see Medjid Rezvani. "La Danse en Perse." (III). *Archives internationales de la danse,* April 15, 1934, pp. 72-3. The author uses for this kind of dancing the word *meskhere.* It is derived from the Arabic *maskhara,* meaning 'buffoon.' Turkish, *maskara*; Spanish, *mascara.*
26. Nicholas Nicholay. *The Navigation, peregrinations and voyages made into Turkie.* Translated out of the French by T. Washington, the younger. London, 1585, pp. 95-6.

Grotesque dancers with masks. Miniature (Topkapu Sarayi Museum, Istanbul. Album Murat III, No. 1344; sixteenth century)

MIMETIC DANCES

Several Turkish folk dances have a pantomimic character. They can be classified generally in four groups—those representing the actions of animals, those representing the daily routine and work of village life, those personifying nature and those depicting combat (with or without weapons).

An excellent example of an animal dance is the *turna barı* which is performed by two dancers who imitate the courtship of two cranes—the crane being sacred among ancient Turks. The male crane forces the female crane to kneel down, and onlookers then offer her dried fruits which she eats whilst performing crane-like gestures and imitating bird-like noises, gazing all the time at her mate. When this is finished the male stands on her shoulders and beats his wings.

An eagle dance called *kartal halayı* depicts the hopping, sidling advance of the bird of prey as it approaches a corpse, the hands and arms of the dancers doing duty as wings.

Another dance is the *tavuk barı* or *hikari* which, by means of the dancers' performing constant slow crouching movements and resting their weight on their heels, shows the antics of the hen, a principal animal in the ancient twelve animal Turkish calendar and also one of the twelve famous *bar* of Erzurum.

Deve oyunu, a very popular dance in Turkey, shows a large scale hobby horse, or rather hobby camel. Two persons, taking the part of the front and back legs respectively, hide themselves under a large cover. On their shoulders they carry a framework of wood representing the hump of the camel. The front dancer holds a sickle which creates the impression of the curve of the camel's neck. The head is lavishly ornamented with colored beads, tassels, and bells. The camel is also furnished with a tail. The camel dances, hops, shakes his head and, when he becomes angry, chases the onlookers who have been teasing him. When he is sad, he lies on the ground as if he had expired. He has two good friends, the dignified lion and the ferocious hyena. Both of these animals are represented by dancers clad in sheepskin, wearing appropriate masks and holding long sticks

with an animal's tail attached to one end—this represents a flaming torch. To the accompaniment of a pipe and drum, they dance, act, threaten the onlookers and collect money from them. The camel dance is also to be found in the Elkovo district of Bulgaria.

Ayı oyunu imitates a very common dance of the Gypsy-trained performing bears, and is found mainly in Eastern Turkey.

Ceylani, as the name implies, is a dance from Kars imitating the walking and reaching, chest expanding movements of the gazelle.

Of the pantomimes of events from everyday life many illustrations could be given. The best example of them is *köy halayı,* the other names of which are *yörük halayı, yörük ağırlaması, kürt halayı* and *aşiret halayı*—these dances are from Sıvas and its vicinity.

The dance starts with a promenade in which the dancers, while walking, bend their bodies backwards, rub their chests with both hands and clap their hands above their heads. Then they kneel and begin to mime such everyday operations from village life as sifting flour, kneading dough and baking bread. They execute these synchronized work movements in perfect unison. They stand and promenade a second time, then they kneel again to depict combing wool, spinning the spindle and weaving rugs or clothes. They stand once more and promenade again before kneeling for the last time to per-

Köy halayı from Sıvas

Hançer barı (dagger dance) from Erzurum

form movements representing hair washing and combing, looking at a hand mirror and curling their mustaches. They finish with a lively dance called *hoplatma,* a thanksgiving or favor asking ritual.

There is also a mimetic song dance called *türkmen kızı* which is in a similar vein and in which the actions of the dancer are suited to the words of the song. It is danced by either a woman or a couple. The dance consists of two parts. The first is a non-mimetic promenade in which the dancer steps forward on her left foot, closes right foot to left, then steps forward on the left foot again and also closes the right foot to left. This time continuing without stopping, she steps forward on the right foot and the left closes to the right. When the woman is promenading she makes sounds with her fingers or holds her arms extended to both sides while her partner claps his hands. In the second part, which is mimetic, a group of singers sing the words of the song which parallel the actions of the dance, and the dancer depicts her own daily occupations by measured gestures. These gestures show the milking of cows, weaving, kneading dough, combing wool, cooking milk, stringing beads, etc. Between each action the song has a refrain during which the dancer, kneeling on her left knee, extends her right foot forward and, by turning on her axis, describes a circle by brushing the ground with her toes. At the same time she claps her hands.

There are other dances using occupational mime, for instance *teşi,* a solo dance from Artvin, Eastern Turkey, which imitates the

twisting and spinning of thread, and *leli aşo* from *Elazığ* which depicts the kneading of dough and spinning of wool.

Another mimetic song dance is *esnaf* (meaning 'craftsman'), a woman's dance from Kastamonu, Central Turkey, in which the steps and gestures reflect movements used in the works of various trades. The minimum number of dancers required is four. The participants are generally arranged in two rows facing each other; one row representing the apprentices, the other the masters. The apprentices put forward the question while the master craftsmen sway their hands in cadence—"How does the blacksmith forge iron?" The masters listen attentively until the question has been put and then take up an attitude which represents the blacksmith's hammering. They lean to one side and make a hammering motion. They repeat the same movement on either side four times and strengthen the effect by verbal suggestions such as—"They forge this way, that way." While the master craftsmen are performing the apprentices listen with their hands clasped behind their backs and when it is finished, they repeat the same action. Then both rows make a half turn, they promenade in a circle until they come to the same position again. Then they begin to imitate other trades in the same fashion, among them the tinsmith, coppersmith, weaver, felt maker and tanner.

Certain movements have been abstracted from nature and have been reduced to the simplest cadence. There is *uzundere* from Kars. It means 'long river' and the action of waves is very well imitated in this dance. A delicately patterned chain dance for women is the *ben bir kavak olaydım* (meaning 'if I were a poplar tree'), in which a string of women dancers glides with sideways steps. The women softly sway their bodies and outstretched arms like the waving of poplar trees.

There are combat dances, some of which use weapons like daggers, swords and rifles. Some dances mime warfare, others give the impression of a dance preparatory to battle. There are the *hançer barı* from Erzurum and the *bıçak horonu* from the Black Sea coast in which two dancers with two daggers in each hand depict the movements of attack and defense. In the *köroğlu* two dancers cut and slash through the air in all directions with their swords.

The renowned *kılıç ve kalkan oyunu* from Bursa is a dance without musical accompaniment. Dancers, equipped with shields and drawn scimitars, provide their own music and rhythm with clashes

of swords on shields. It is a veritable grand ballet in six parts: (a) recruiting the soldiers and seeing them off; (b) after the recruits have been obtained, the taking of the oath; (c) the soldiers sharpen their scimitars and engage in combat with the enemy; (d) the armistice after the combat; (e) certain challenging gestures during the armistice; (f) combatants try to recapture their weapons by some tricks and, meantime, there is further battle.

There are numerous sword and shield dances bearing the name *kılıç-kalkan oyunu* from Urfa, Muş, Elazığ, and Siirt. There are also dances which, though called *kalkan* meaning 'shield,' do not use a shield. In Muğla, for example, the *kalkan* is danced with two daggers in each hand, whilst in Kütahya a dagger is used in each hand for protection.

In Giresun on the Black Sea coast a rifle dance called *çandırlı tüfek oyunu* is usually performed when a crowd comes to take a bride to another village, and it is danced in front of her home. The dancers, led by the powder carrier, have their rifles strapped on their backs with the barrels pointing to the ground. They move in a circle to the accompaniment of music. The powder carrier yells an order, and the riflemen take their rifles and fire at the ground in the middle of the circle. The powder carrier comes to the center of the circle and distributes powder to the dancers. They bang their rifles on the ground three times to the 9/8 rhythm of the music—this depicts the loading of the rifles. Then they put their rifles on their backs again and begin a quick dance called *titiz horon.*

Some dances make use of weapons but do not imitate warlike deeds. In a dance called *bıçak* from Elazığ several men with daggers in their hands pretend to attack a girl who is sitting on the edge of a drum. They want to exhibit their virility, frighten each other, and arouse jealousy in each other. There is a similar dance from Çorum called *yerli zeybek.*

In some dances offensive weapons are omitted yet attack and defense are mimed. Some dances are a combination of dance and sportive game in which the participants exhibit their physical prowess. There is a large variety of these dances from various districts and with various names. There are slight differences in the choreographic patterns and movements but, basically, the idea is the same. Usually the dancers stand in two lines facing each other and jump at each other, striking each other's palms vigorously. They turn on their own

Kılıç-kalkan oyunu (sword and shield dance) from Bursa

axes and attack repeatedly. Usually the dancers prepare themselves before attacking by clapping their own hands together in cadence. Variations occur in dances where the striking of palms occurs while the dancer performs crouching positions and knee bendings. Some of the names are *karakıştanı* from Siirt, *çepik* from Mardin, *yarkuşta* from Muş and *çabukay* from Bingöl.

This catalogue of combat dances without weapons would not be complete without mentioning the *sinsin,* a very popular dance in Anatolia and found also in Northern, Southern, Central and Central Eastern Turkey. It is a dance performed at night. The people stand around a bonfire in a large circle. A dancer in the middle of the circle performs a dance with his left fist on his chest, his right elbow touching his flank and his right hand on his hip from behind. He circles backwards to the left. Someone leaves the ring and tries to force the dancer out of the circle by hitting him on his right biceps with the left hand. The first dancer, without responding or retaliating, retires and is replaced by the newcomer, who repeats the same movements until he is replaced. There is no hitting with the right hand, and the dance gradually increases in speed, complete with leapings over the fire. The impression gathered by a neophyte is very mysterious. While there is no tangible evidence, *sinsin* may have been a moon dance or even a death and resurrection dance.

REGIONAL DANCES

When we speak of Turkish dances we must bear in mind that there is no single national Turkish dance. There is no one which is widespread over the entire country, although attempts have been made to popularize certain dances.[27] It must always be remembered that each region, even each village, has its own dance. Though widely different in character and origin the regional dances of Turkey may be classified into four or five groups according to geographical boundaries, in many cases overlapping. It should be made clear at the beginning that *halay, bar, horon, nanay* and *zeybek,* to mention only five, are generic terms used for various types of dances which differ in the various ethnical provinces.

The dances of Trakya, the European part of Turkey, are typified by *karşılama, hora* and *salma,* chain dances also popular in the Balkans. One of the most outstanding characteristics of this region is the use of two drums and two pipes. One well known dance, called *zigoş* is usually danced by six couples standing in two rows. They advance towards and recede from each other with their backs slightly bent. The beginning is soft and the movement gradually becomes violent, to be followed later by crouching movements. There are also sideways steps and embracing gestures.

One of the most widely known of Turkish dances is the *zeybek,* characteristic of Western Turkey and found, more specifically, on the Aegean coast. It is executed by a single dancer or by several. But even in the latter case it keeps its solo character, for each dancer, though following the movements of the others, always dances apart. In its basic movement the dancers kneel on one leg while their other leg is in a half bent position. They hold their arms outstretched with elbows as high as the shoulders and snap their fingers. Every *zeybek* is preceded by a slow, introductory part in which the dancer tries

27. "Pasha Mustapha Kemal (Atatürk) tries to popularize native *zeybek* dance." *The New York Times,* November 5, 1933.

Zeybek from Balıkesir

leisurely walking steps. This part looks as if the dancers are testing the ground and tuning their bodies to the rhythm. This walking is done first with the arms at the side, then at shoulder level. It is a dance of solemn, heroic style. The dancers, also called *zeybek,* wear short embroidered trousers which accommodate their kneelings.

It has been claimed the *zeybek* is a dance of Hellenic origin and Greeks add a Greek suffix, making *zeybekikos.* This is far from being true. Not only is the dance of obvious Turkish style and tradition but there is evidence proving its Turkish origin. *Zeybek* can be found in other parts of Turkey, even Far Eastern Turkey. There are even villages bearing the name 'Zeybek,' and as the Turks came to Anatolia from East to West a reverse direction of influence is not credible.

Another type of dance from this region is the *bengi,* a group dance which seeks to represent unity and solidarity and is similar to *zeybek.* One well known *bengi,* called *Pamukçu bengisi* takes its name from the village of its origin.

Halay is a type of dance which is more widespread than any other from Anatolia. It is found in most parts of Central Anatolia, Eastern Anatolia and the South, and in this large area nearly every Turkish village has its own *halay* with its own special tune. The names of the dances vary although their origin is the same. In *halay* dancers place themselves in a line or in a semi-circle, holding each

Halay from Sıvas (Photograph by Ara Güler)

other's hands or shoulders. One dancer acts as their leader and is called *baş çeken*. He regulates steps and directs the figures and, sometimes, he breaks away from the line and executes solo dances facing the line. In some *halay* from Çorum, a notable *halay* center, the leader visits every member of the line and, whilst keeping time with the music, greets them with an embracing gesture over each shoulder. When the leader has finished with every member of the company, the dancers in the line half turn to face each other in pairs and repeat the same movement. The other *halay* center is Sıvas where we find more than sixty *halay,* usually for men, but also several for women. There are certain differences in style and detail between men's and women's *halay*; for example, men dancers wave the handkerchiefs they hold, whereas women hold theirs still and keep them folded; women are usually accompanied by tambourines, men are not; women's arms are not extended above the shoulder, whereas men stretch out their arms. The women do not puff out their chests like the men and there is no crouching in women's *halay*. Also the walking section in women's *halay* is shorter and in the men's *halay* there are sections which are very slow.

Most renowned of the dances of Northern Turkey on the Black Sea coast is the group called *horon* (in some districts called *horan*)

which is characterized by alert, tense shivering movements, the trembling of the entire body from head to foot or sudden sharp kneelings and springing up with a rebound. The inhabitants of this area are mostly fishermen or men connected with the sea so no doubt a rough sea shapes their movements and rhythms. Curiously these shivering movements have points of resemblance to the trembling movements of Yugoslavian dances from Zagreb or the dances of Satah del Khzem in North Africa. The etymology of the name *horon* is uncertain but the name is reminiscent of the Hellenic word *choros* or *hora,* and Greeks who lived in Asia Minor called it *chorontikon.* Yet this is not enough to prove a Greek or Balkan influence, for there is the *khorumi* dance of the Caucasus in which the dancers wear dresses and knotted hoods similar to those of the *horon* dancers from the Black Sea coast. *Horon* is a chain dance but there are also couple *horon* like the "dagger" *horon.* The leader of the chain is called *horoncubaşı* or *çavuş* and he indicates dance sequences by yelling. There are also women's *horon* in which women do not stretch their arms out high or kneel down as the men do. Many *horon* take their names from towns on the Black Sea coast like Maçka, Tonya, Sıksaray. Various *horon* make a suite of dances. Other characteristics of movement in the *horon* are trembling while leaning forward, opening outstretched arms, leapings, knee bendings, touching each other's shoulders and crouchings.

The group of dances most popular in Central Turkey is *kaşık oyunu,* in which the dancers carry in each hand a pair of varnished wooden spoons, one of which is inserted between thumb and forefinger and the other between the middle and ring finger—in this position they are clicked like castanets. The dancer treads with very small steps in a confined space while undulating the lower part of his body. We find other spoon dances such as the Uzbek *koyrak,* the *racosi* from Central Asia and the *akkarena siru* from Celebes, where the spoons are porcelain. Another well known spoon dance is *meşeli* from Bolu, for four or six dancers. The dancers start by saluting the onlookers. This salute consists of crouching, touching their spoons first on the ground, then on their chins and then on their foreheads. The dancers face each other in pairs. They approach, recede, kneel and turn.

Perhaps the most remarkable dances are the group called *bar,* of which there are about forty variations. They are mostly chain

dances but there are also several *bar* for two dancers. The most popular of the chain variety are the twelve different *bar* from Erzurum. There are usually five dancers, but there could be many more. Chain *bar* demands a head leader called *barbaşı,* who stands at the right of the chain, and a tail leader called *poççik.* Each has his own responsibility. *Bar* unfolds in sequences made of walks, runnings, leapings, sittings, knee bendings and recedings. They are characterized by light footedness and it is the ball of the foot that comes most into play. The pose of the dancers is upright. There are also *bar* danced by two dancers facing each other.

Eastern Turkey is also the home of two types of dancing known as *nanay* and *yallı. Nanay* are dances accompanied by slowly, solemnly sung songs. They are usually mixed dances and the dancers are linked together by their small fingers as they dance. Sometimes, when the number of participants amounts to between forty and fifty, they form concentric circles. First the leader sings a line which is then repeated by the others; without doubt the name *nanay* is derived from the refrain *"nanay nay nanay,"* onamatopoeic syllables depicting instrumental accompaniment. *Yallı* are faster than *nanay* and the dancers are linked by resting their hands on each other's shoulders. In most of the Eastern solo and couple dances we find delicate hand and wrist movements, which are extremely expressive, but which are pure movements to be danced to music and not, like some elaborate gesture language of certain Asiatic dances, intended to interpret anything.

South Eastern Turkey borrowed much from Eastern Anatolia and Central Eastern Anatolia, yet their dances show a distinctive style. An exact team work in chain dances is accomplished by the synchronization of the foot work, as if the dancers were proficients in geometrical science. Their constant, springing movements, coupled with the fact that the dancers are packed tightly together, shoulder to shoulder with hands clasping each other behind their backs, give the impression that they are one solid moving wall, which sways gently backwards as the dancers move.

Bar from Erzurum (Photograph by Ara Güler)

FORMATIONS, MOVEMENTS AND STYLE

Turkish dances can be divided into three typical choreographic categories: the ring or chain dances, couple dances and solo dances. The closed circle dances are fewer than the chain or straight line dances, sometimes both are combined and give way to one another, the dancers either breaking the circle to range in a semi-circle or vice versa. In some instances the ring encircles a person. It is sometimes the drummer who stands in the middle of the circle as in the *mengi* from Izmir, or the bridegroom with the drummer as in a *halay* danced at weddings in Niğde. In some dances performers make two concentric circles; in some dances it is the women who take the inner circle, while the men dance in an outer one, as is the case in *iğdeli gelin,* a beautiful song dance from Çorum. In some dances it is the inner circle which is composed of men while the women form the outer one, an example of this is the *semah* from Sıvas-Divrik. In religious *devr* we have already seen that the inner circle is taken by more devoted adepts.

In some dances a very impressive sight comes when the dancers narrow or widen the circle, this is the case in *Pamukçu bengisi,* from Balıkesir. Speaking of circle dances one should emphasize that the direction of the circle in the majority of Turkish dances is counter-clockwise. Could this be a remnant of the emigration direction of the Finno-Ugrian and Turki tribes in the past? However in some dances there are alternate changes of direction. One should mention also pyramidical formations in which the dancers belonging to one circle pile up on the shoulders of dancers of another circle. Examples of this are *halka oyunu* from Kemah, *bayburt oyunu* from Sıvas, *gemi oyunu,* a song dance from Manisa and *omuz halayı* from Tokat. This last dance derives its name from the Turkish word *omuz,* meaning 'shoulder.'

The favorite type of choreography is a single line, either straight or near to a semi-circle. Dancers link themselves together in various ways, either by clasping little fingers or palms or holding each other's shoulders. In Erzurum a common grip consists of placing the arm

around the neighbor's waist. Hands are sometimes clenched at shoulder level, sometimes behind the back of the dancer below the waist, sometimes above or below the shoulder or by hooking arms. There are instances when dancers hold the ends of a handkerchief instead of the hands of their partners. This is done in dances where the sexes stand in alternate positions in a straight line. In this type of dancing there is always a leader who is on the extreme right of the chain, who precedes the dancers and usually waves a handkerchief. In many dances it is the leader who indulges in any elaborate steps, for the other dancers merely to follow him; in some dances there are two leaders, and the second leader is placed in the middle of the line. Many chain dances are mixed dances in which the men and women stand alternately, as in the *mendil oyunu* from Gaziantep. In a similar vein in *süzme oyunu* from Bitlis dancers arrange themselves in such a way that a woman stands at one end and a man at the other. In *koç halayı* from Sıvas and Sarıkışla each sex occupies one half of the line. In many dances the performers stand in two lines facing each other, a few yards apart. This is a very common formation used mostly in dances with a combat flavor or in song dances in which participants, while dancing, sing in turn. Much *karşılama* dancing is of this type. An excellent example of it is *govent* from Siirt. In this, two lines or strings of dancers, one composed of men

Iğdeli gelin

Women's dance from Erzurum (Photograph by Ara Güler)

and the other of women, sometimes advance a step towards each other, sometimes retire; the women sing songs in praise of the men's leader, called *sergovent*.

There are also sitting dances like the previously mentioned *koç halayı* and the women's dance, *şeve kırmak* or *nalkalım oyunu*, from Beypazar. The dancers kneel down in circle formation and dance by walking on their knees.

There are other dances in which the leader of the chain acts independently or detaches himself from the line and the others merely accompany him, as in *kara kız* from Gaziantep.

There is another choreographic pattern in which dancers pass under an archway made by the raised arms of a couple. In their turn others take their place whilst the first couple joins the line. Examples of this are the *uzun urgan* (meaning 'long rope') from Kütahya or *iğdır barı* from Kars.

Couple dances are danced by two men or two women or by one man and one woman. Dagger and sword dances are in this category. Couple dances with men and women are flirtatious or erotic in character. Sometimes the man's part is taken by a woman. For instance, the song dance called *sudan geçirme* is executed by two women, one playing the shepherd's part, the other the shepherdess. Between the two dancers lies a cushion representing a river and the shepherdess asks her partner's help to cross the river. She offers various parts of her body in return for the help, for example her eye-

brows and her lips. When the bargaining is concluded the shepherdess is helped and they perform a song dance. In a dance called *karşılama,* one woman takes the young man's part and the other the part of a Greek girl, *rum kızı.* The young man insists upon seeing the girl's face and she opposes him. Finally he sees her face and they dance.

In *sarı zeybek* a woman, or a man disguised as a woman, sits on a chair with a mincing air. Two men, with a dagger in each hand, circle around her, kneel and beg to attract her attention. Then, getting annoyed with her aloofness, they threaten to attack her with the daggers. Eventually, the woman smiles, rises and starts to dance with the men.

There are a large number of mixed couple dances in which the man pursues whilst the woman retreats coquettishly. As a rule the man never touches his partner and in many dances from Eastern Turkey, especially Kars, the man follows the girl closely with open arms, like barriers, encircling her and at the same time the girl is making expressive movements with her hands and wrists. In some mixed couple dances it is the man who is followed by the girl, later he turns and they face each other. Such a dance is the *çeçen oyunu* from Ankara. In another dance from Ankara, *sürdüm oyunu,* the girl sits on a chair in the middle of the room. The man turns round her and touches her with a stick which he leaves with her and retires. The girl then takes the stick and invites a man from the onlookers. This time the man sits in the chair and the girl turns around him. She repeats the action with the stick and onlookers tap the rhythm. *Terekeme* from Kars is another beautiful couple dance.

A large number of dances are performed by a single dancer, man or woman. In most of these dances there is large scope for improvisation and they have a spectacular character. They are usually danced by professional male or female dancers hired for parties or similar occasions. In some solo dances there is a constant replacing of one dancer by another, as we have already seen in *sinsin* where the dancer in the middle leaves when he is hit and is replaced by another. In *tek oyunu* from Muş the solo dancer has two handkerchiefs in each hand and when he finishes his turn he throws the handkerchief to one of the onlookers, who then carries on the dance.

There are also certain dances performed in a marching procession. In some parts of Turkey in a wedding procession when the

bride is accompanied to the neighboring village, where the groom is living, she is carried in a palanquin. The person at the head of the column performs dances, usually with swords, in some cases with swords and shields. There is an account of a curious dance from Çankırı in which, while the procession is moving, people carry large heavy cauldrons (called *hayrat kazanı*) supported by long sticks that are placed across them. Inside these cauldrons dancing boys are carried and they dance inside the cauldron while the column is moving.

Many of the dances appear to be extremely simple and without climax, not to say monotonous, and yet the precision with which they are accomplished, the simultaneousness of every movement and their fascinating rhythm cannot be easy to acquire. In style the women's dances are quiet and restrained and the men's are, generally, vigorous. Maybe there is no single Turkish dance representative of the whole country and yet each dance contains certain common elements of style and basic movements. Among these basic movements one which is most common throughout the country is the crouching or kneeling movement, which could be due to a Central Asian influence. Almost every region has this movement in one form or another. Another characteristic is the lifting of one knee to a half bent position so that the sole of the foot is parallel to the ground while the other leg supports the weight. Heavy stamping of the feet is another typically Turkish characteristic. Almost every Turkish dance opens with the dancers hardly moving. They listen to the music, prepare themselves and tune themselves to the rhythm. After a while one can see from the light on their faces that they are ready. This static section usually takes a tone of incantation which shows secret ties with the ritualistic past of these dances. Another peculiarity is the use of spoons or snapping of fingers to mark rhythm, while trembling is another frequent occurrence in the dances. A common arm posture, which is portrayed in old miniatures and prints, is to have one arm extended above the shoulder while the other points downwards. This can be seen, especially, in the illustrations of the arm posture of dancing girls and whirling dervishes.

OCCASIONS AND ETIQUETTE FOR DANCING

As has already been stressed Turkish dancing developed on two planes, that of the old Istanbul and urbanized dances and that of the peasant dances. We must, therefore, keep these two spheres in mind when we discuss occasions for dancing.

The court influence at the time of the Ottoman Empire was considerable and the slightest happening at court could have its effect on the outside populace. The birth of a new prince, the circumcision ceremony of a prince, a court marriage, the ascension of a new ruler and the girding of the sultan's sword all provided occasions for public festivities. We must not forget, also, the public processions for such events as the triumph of a warrior, the departure of the army for a new conquest, their return after conquest, the arrival of a foreign ambassador or visitor and the procession called *Sürre Alayı* which celebrated the departure of the sultan's gifts to Mecca. An historical example of the length of these festivities is found in the occasion of the birth of the first son of Sultan Osman II when the celebrations lasted for seven days and nights. Another example is shown by the ten day and night nation-wide festivities held at the birth of Ahmet III's first son.

These festivities were large scale, spectacular pageants and consisted of mock battles between Moslems and Christians, water triumphs, various plays, circus acts, fireworks, horse races, dancing and music.[28] In Istanbul these festivities were held in the Hippodrome which still bears the same name of At Meydanı. The festivities of the Byzantine Empire had been held in the same place.

During these pageants as well as the usual dancing, plays and music, the various guilds and trade organizations would display their

28. See a detailed account of this pageantry in Michel Baudier. *Histoire Générale du Sérail, et de la cour du Grand Seigneur Empereur des Turcs.* Rouen, 1638, pp. 161-74.

Circumcision ceremony with musicians (Franz Taeschner. *Alt-Stambuler Hof-und Volksleben, ein Türkisches Miniaturenalbum aus dem 17 Jahrhundert.* Hanover, 1925)

trade techniques in a festive manner and would supplement them with dancing and plays of their own. The various religious orders, too, would perform their dances thereby showing a spectacular, worldly aspect of their character as a contrast to the more austere, spiritual aspect.

Apart from these occasional festivities celebrating special events, there were the regular anniversary, religious, commemorative and patriotic holidays which included dancing in their celebrations. Whilst talking of court inspired celebrations, we must not forget the magnificent festivities which were given by the sultans or other dignitaries in honor of some important guest, the occasion not being confined solely to the amusement of the court.

In the villages the occasions for dancing were more numerous. Apart from the usual family celebrations of birth, circumcision and marriage which are naturally festive events, the peasants would celebrate by dance seasonal changes, the end of certain agricultural activities and certain pagan remnants in their lives. From the very beginning the dance played an integral part in the lives of the peasants. The woman, who is nursing her baby and rocking the cradle, had

her rocking movements related to her lullaby. The person who noticed a child's first tooth was obliged to give a present. The coming of the tooth was also celebrated with a party, *diş hediği,* in which dancing was prominent.

When a boy reached a certain age he was circumcised, as was every Moslem boy, and his circumcision was celebrated by a ceremony called *sünnet düğünü,* which included dancing. The word *düğün* was also used for a wedding ceremony, inferring that the two were of equal prominence. Another indication of the importance attached to the circumcision ceremony is that the circumcised boy was dressed for the occasion like a bridegroom. Another *düğün* marked the coming of age of a girl. In some parts of Turkey this was called *güççe düğünü.* When the girl had reached the age of ten or twelve and no longer showed interest in her dolls, a celebration was given to mark this turning point in her life. The women were invited. Her doll was dressed and ornamented as a bride and put in a prominent place whilst professional musicians and dancers, hired for the occasion, performed.

It was marriage which provided the biggest dancing occasion in the lives of the peasants. The ceremony itself was a series of complicated sequences. Men and women pursued parallel celebrations. The dancing was of two types, that which was purely festive and that which was of a sacred and symbolic nature, danced as a counteraction to evil influences. In the course of time the reasons for the latter type have become obscured and forgotten and now all the dancing is merely festive. One sacred dance which survives, however, is a song dance from Elazığ called *çayda çırağ,* a henna staining dance with lighted candles. Henna is not only a cosmetic, a coloring matter for make up, but it is also used as a protection against malign forces and is a help to ward off the 'evil eye.' The dancers, arranged in a line, have burning candles on saucers which they hold in the palm of each hand. With the hands they perform a series of gracious twirling movements without extinguishing the candles. Similar sorts of dances with candles can be found in other countries which have been exposed to Moslem influence such as Persia, North Africa and Malaya, where the dance is called *menari hinei.* There are other dances in Anatolia connecting weddings with the henna staining ceremony. In Diyarbakır, for instance, the bridegroom's staining with henna is accompanied by ten young lads with trays on their heads. These

large trays have sweets and lighted candles on them, and the lads dance and sing songs with them on their heads. If a candle goes out while the dancers are moving around it is relit by an onlooker. When the staining is over, the dancers drop their trays on the floor, and children collect the sweets which have been dropped and spilt.

At weddings in Arapkir the henna staining, night candle ceremony can only be performed by those women who are happily married and who have been married only once. Sword dances can be counted among the still existant dances protecting marriages against evil influences, and we should recall the already mentioned sword dancing at the head of a wedding procession.

During the marriage sequences there occur many occasions for dancing such as the displaying of the girl's dowry and the bathing of the bride by her women companions.

Among the seasonal occasions celebrated by dance is the *Nevruz*. This is the beginning of an old Turkish New Year and is celebrated on the 21st of March, the vernal equinox. This is among the few exceptions to the Mohammedan calendar, which is lunar. Conservative Turks of today have two other New Years as well as *Nevruz*. The first day of the month *Muharrem* is the first day of the lunar year and this occurs four and a half months after the vernal equinox. The Turks also adopted the Gregorian calendar in 1926.

Not all Moslems celebrate the first of *Muharrem* as a New Year's day. It is not celebrated by the Shias who do, however, observe the tenth of *Muharrem* as the anniversary of the death of Hüseyin, Mohammed's grandson. In their *Muharrem* or *Aşura* mysteries, they used to dramatize his martyrdom in passion plays accompanied by bloodshed and dance. Anatolian Shias use the same occasion for solemn mourning, their homage takes a quiet and respectful form without dance. The *Muharrem* mysteries observed by the Azerbaijanian Turks of Caucasia include dancing[29] as well as mourning as do those observed by the Shias of Persia, India and North Africa.

The third New Year falls on the 13th of January of the Julian calendar, and on this day young boys from the villages gather together. One of them has a long rope with a bag attached to it and others disguise themselves as a camel with bells on his neck. One

29. For dancing in the Muharram Mysteries, see Ivar Lassy. *The Muharram Mysteries among the Azerbejan Turks of Caucasia*. Helsingfors, 1916, pp. 85, 107, 114-16, 202.

boy acts as camel driver and they go from house to house. They lower the rope and bag down the chimneys to collect food. The practice is supplemented with dance and games.

Another dance celebration is the spring festival of *Hıdırellez* which falls on the 6th of May. It derives its name from the prophet Hızır, who is reputed to come to the help of mankind in trouble or need. In some parts of Turkey, there is a legend regarding this day. It tells that two lovers, Hızır and Ellez, were able to come together only once a year, on this day, and their meeting is celebrated by dancing and festivities in the open air, among the fields and trees. Not only do people welcome spring on this day but they visit saints' shrines. Three things always accompany this festival: the swings for both children and adults; a purifying ritual of jumping over fire, performed on the eve of the festival, and a 'lucky dip' where objects collected before the day are taken from a previously sealed jar to the accompaniment of verse called *mani*. At both *Nevruz* and *Hıdırellez* there is a custom of eating painted eggs, as at Easter celebrations in Christian countries.

Wedding ceremony with dancers and musicians. The bride and bridegroom are seated at the right. Miniature (Topkapı Sarayı Museum, Istanbul. Album Ahmet I, No. 408; seventeenth century)

Dancing in old Istanbul (Anton Ignaz Melling. *Voyage pittoresque de Constantinople et des rives du Bosphore.* Paris, 1819)

Of the other seasonal celebrations one worth mentioning is the *Koçkatımı,* the season for putting the rams to the ewes. At this festival a boy called *saya* with bells attached to his waist goes to every home and collects food and dances in every house. People believe that during *saya oyunu* the boy must not speak a word for, if he did, the goats would be born dead.

Apart from the seasonal festivals there are various practices which are performed when the need occurs. Among them is a rain making ceremony called *bodi bostan* which has counterparts in other countries. A young boy clad in green leaves goes from house to house singing. At every house water is poured on his head. In Yugoslavia the *dodole* and in Rumania the *pirpiruna,* rituals for invoking rain, consist of a girl clad only in green leaves visiting each house, having water poured over her head at each, and dancing. No doubt the Turkish *bodi bostan* was of similar origin, but during the course of time has lost its dance element.

A ritual which aims at the opposite effect, the ending of rain and the bringing of sunlight, is the *kuç kuçura,* found solely on the rainy Black Sea coast and probably of Hellenic origin. This practice consists of young boys visiting houses to the accompaniment of a fiddle. They carry burning torches, sing and dance in front of each

house, receive food and frequently throw their flaming torches into the houses, symbolizing the coming of the sun.

The places where dances were performed are many and varied. They could have been performed in public baths, at picnics, in the open air, in fields, in public squares or in houses. The indoor parties have various names according to the region such as *cem, oturak, cümbüş, muhabbet, sohbet, afrana* and *helva sohbeti.* Some of these have an orgiastic character.

A strict etiquette is observed at these parties especially, of course, at the mixed parties. Among the many rules of etiquette the most obvious is that man and woman must never touch. In some regions men and women are only allowed to dance if closely related. Sometimes the parties are segregated, and the men and women pursue their pleasures independently. At the women's parties it is common for a mother to show her daughter dancing to the mothers of eligible bachelors. There are also rules for the masters of ceremony and leaders of the chain dances. For instance, if a leader feels in the course of the dance that there are better dancers than himself, he resigns from the leadership.

From prints of old Istanbul it can be gathered that the shores of the Golden Horn and Bosphorous were among the most popular places for dancing. Also in Istanbul, apart from the taverns already described, there were well attended coffee houses called *semai kahveleri* in a part of which there were readings of verse and poetry competitions between minstrels and, of course, dancing.[30] Dancing used to accompany also various ceremonies, particularly the graduation days of various guilds and universities called *medrese.*

30. For an early account of these Turkish coffee houses, see Michel Febvre. *Théâtre de la Turquie.* Paris, 1682, p. 286.

Horon from Rize, with *tulum* player at left (Photograph by Ara Güler)

MUSIC AND COSTUME FOR DANCING

Two instruments are most popular and almost indispensible as accompaniment for the dance—the *zurna* and *davul.* The first is a conical shaped, oboe-like instrument with a shrill sound. It has a reed mouthpiece and disk which serve as support for the lips of the player. Similar instruments can be found in other parts of the East. The names, too, bear a strong resemblance to each other. In Arabic the *zurna* is called *surnay,* in Persian *surna* and in Indian *sanai.* In Chinese it is *suoonah,* and in Yugoslavian it is *zurla.* The second instrument, the *davul,* is a large two-headed, cylindrical drum. The player hangs the instrument from his shoulder and plays both drumheads with two sticks. The one in his left hand is a tiny flexible stick called *çomak* and the one in the right hand is a hammer-headed stick called *tokmak,* which is used to punctuate the rhythm. The *davul* is known as *tabl* in Arabic and *dholla* in India, yet it could have originated in Central Asia like many other words in Anatolian dance lexicography. In the Buryat dialect of Central Asia the word *dakhul,* a similar sounding word to *davul,* means a malicious spirit or the soul of a deceased poor man. As the Central Asian medicine man, the shaman, plays a drum to exorcise evil spirits, the same word may have been borrowed in this connection.

There are other wind instruments and percussion instruments. *Mey* (not to be confused with *ney* which is a horizontal flute) resembles the *zurna* in sound but differs from it by its smaller size and cylindrical shape. There is the *kaval,* a shepherd's flute made either of wood or metal, which can be found also in Bulgaria and Rumania under the same name. There is a primitive bagpipe called the *tulum,* which is found mostly in the North Eastern part of Turkey. It is made from goat or sheepskin and has two pipes, one with five holes and the other with two.

From the drum family there is a smaller sized *davul* called, in certain regions, *dünbelek,* which is intended primarily for indoor use. There is also a *darbuka,* which comprises a clay vessel in the shape of

a chimney pot over one side of which is tied a sheepskin. The performer holds the instrument across his knees as he taps out the rhythm with his fingers. Various types of tambourines, called *tef,* are also used in connection with dancing. Some are furnished with jingling metal discs, two or three in each row. Nor must we forget the small sized kettle drums called *kudüm,* which were used in religious dancing and military processional music.

When speaking of percussion instruments for dance accompaniment, mention should be made of the various sorts of clappers used in old Turkish dances as well as in regional dances by the dancers themselves. The oldest type consists of two wooden sticks held in each hand. These are like the Arabian *taqtaqa* and are called by the Persian name *çarpara* or *çalpara,* meaning 'four pieces.' There are a large number of dances which make use of wooden spoons as we have already noted. And there are tiny metal finger cymbals called *zil.* There are also *zilli maşa* which are three branched clappers with small bells attached to them.[31] In some dances, clappers are omitted, the dancers marking the time either by hand clapping or heavy finger snapping. In some, dancers make a staccato clicking sound by snapping their fingers against the floor as in a dance from Çorum called *fidayda.*

Among the many bowed instruments, *kemençe,* the beloved bowed viol of the Black Sea coast, is to be well noted. It has a gourd body and three strings, tuned a fourth apart; one is steel and the others are made from different material. There is also a large variety of lutes, instruments with pear shaped bodies and long handles. The general name for them is *saz.* The *saz* varies in its number of strings, from three to twelve, and in its size, from large to small, with differing names, *meydan sazı* or *divan sazı, bağlama.* The smaller size is called *cura* in Izmir district and *çökür* in the South. On the Black Sea coast one variant is called *bozuk* and it usually has eight strings. It is very commonly used among minstrels as well as being a dance accompanying instrument. Various other instruments connected with dancing are either rare, out of use or of foreign origin; the panpipe, *miskal,* and the upperchested harp, *çenk,* are examples

31. "The dancers have in each hand two pieces of Ebony, 3 or 4 inches long, which they knock and charre together in time to the musick. I fancy they are every *whit* as good as our castagnettes. They call them in Turkish *chalpareh* . . ." Bent, *op. cit.,* p. 215.

Zilli maşa player. Miniature (Topkapı Sarayı Museum, Istanbul. Album Ahmet I, No. 408; seventeenth century)

of outdated Turkish instruments, and the *armonika,* most commonly used by Circassians, is an example of a foreign instrument.

Quite a number of dances are accompanied by songs, and the dance takes the name of the song. They are sung either by dancers or onlookers. In some dances, there are long dialogues in song in which the dancers divide into two sections, one singing and the other answering while they dance. Some of these dances from Rize and Ordu (Black Sea coast) are mixed dances in which one of the rows is formed by girls and the other by eligible young bachelors. They sing love songs while they are dancing. The group, *karşılama,* comprises more dances of this sort. Sometimes instrumental music alternates with songs or the song itself contains onomatopoeic words denoting the sounds of instruments such as—*"tini nan nam," "nay nini," "tinanay nay"* or *"bambili bili bilibam."* Dance songs are sung in unison.

Rhythmically many Turkish dances are sweepingly distinctive such as the *aksak* rhythms (meaning 'limping'). These are polyrhythmic and asymmetrical complex rhythms such as 9/8, 9/4, 10/8, 7/8 etc. Another distinctive feature is certain pentatonic melodies. Besides dances with one tempo there are dances in which the change

of tempo and measure divide the dance into several parts, two, three, four, even more, thereby making a suite of dances. *Halays* are of this type. Usually a slow tempo is followed by a quicker one. For instance, the *kızık halayı* from Sıvas has three sections: 1) *ağırlama,* 2) *sıktırma,* (or *yanlama*), 3) *hoplatma.* A *halay* from Çorum has four sections: 1) *ağırlama,* 2) *oynatma,* 3) *ikileme,* 4) *yelleme.* Today many Turkish composers, interested in the fascinating rhythms of Turkish dance, have used them in their works of symphonic stature or included them as dance movements in their suites or sonatas. Among them are Cemal Reşit Rey, Ahmet Adnan Saygun, Ulvi Cemal Erkin and Bülent Tarcan. A young Turkish composer, Bülent Arel, wrote a dance suite made of four Turkish dances for the symphonic orchestra in which he made the full sized orchestra dependent on beats of a genuine Turkish drum, *davul.*

Like dances, dance costumes show peculiar features according to the various regions of the country where the dances originated, yet they have certain points in common. For instance, decency required that no man or woman dancer should allow any hair to be seen, yet today male dancers from certain districts like Erzurum do not wear anything on their heads. The man's headgear in some districts was a red felt fez with a turban around it. In some other regions dancers just put a turban, either a one-colored or multi-colored scarf, around their heads. This headgear is known as *poşu.* Dancers of the Black Sea coast (*horon* dancers) have a peculiar hood which consists of a long black scarf rolled around and knotted several times like a turban with an end coming out from each side like two ears. It is called *başlık.* Some dancers from the Aegean coast have a headgear made of mountain flowers. Women dancers from various districts wear a *fes* or a pill box shaped hat with a veil or silk scarf on top of it. The ends of the scarf either hang down or are clasped tightly under the chin. Sometimes the headgear is ornamented with various strings of gold coins on the forehead. In some districts, dancers simply wear a silk scarf, folded diagonally and worn loosely, the ends of it hanging over the shoulders or all the way behind the dancer, as in the headgear of Kars.

The men's trousers are tight fitting below the knees and have extra large folds in the upper part. This sort of trouser, *zıvka,* is very common for Turkish dance, the tight fitting lower leg emphasizes the beautifully synchronized footwork with Prussian precision,

whilst the upper bulky part gives room for the crouching and kneeling movements, which are so common in Turkish dancing. The aforementioned short trousers worn by the *zeybek* dancers serve the same purpose and underneath them are drawers reaching to the knees. Baggy shaped trousers called *şalvar* are common among both men and women. Sometimes they are worn short to the knees as by the Balıkesir dancers. Some women wear *üç etek* (a three piece skirt).

The men wear a shirt (usually white) and over this a sleeveless bolero or small jacket, called *cepken*. *Zeybek* dancers have two wings hanging from the shoulders of this jacket made of the same material. When the dancer moves, these wings open. Usually these jackets are embroidered.

Dancers usually wear soft leather footwear, generally called *yemeni*. In South Eastern Turkey these are usually red. In Eastern Turkey and on the Black Sea coast, dancers wear soft half boots. Men wear a large belt or scarf (usually multi-colored) around their waists, often made of leather. Women usually wear a silver belt. Among the ornaments worn by male dancers in some districts is a long silver watch chain across the chest which moves as the dancer moves. Dancers from Erzurum and Sıvas wear an armlet, a remnant of a ritualistic period, and some male dancers carry various weapons in their belts.

Dancers of Southern Turkey

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Certain names of Turkish dances refer to movements and steps. *Atlama* means 'leaping' and the *atlama horonu,* for example, reveals the principal characteristic of the dance in its name. *Sıçrama* is another word with a similar meaning.

The Turkish word *ayak* when used as a title of a dance signifies 'step' and not its common meaning 'foot.' In dances we get the titles *bir ayak* (one step), *iki ayak* (two step), *üç ayak* (three step), *dört ayak* (four step) and *beş ayak* (five step); all different dances from different regions.

Çömlek oyunu. The name of this dance refers to the kneeling movement characteristic of it.

The name *depki* is derived from the Turkish verb *depmek,* meaning to 'stamp' or 'beat.' The tiny, intricate steps of this dance include some heavy stamping movements.

Dik, meaning 'straight,' is an adjective which precedes the name of many dances and shows a characteristic posture of the dance; e.g., *dik bar, dik halay, dik horon, dik oyunu.*

Diz kırma is the name of a dance and means 'bending the knee.'

Ellik halayı is the name of a dance from Tokat and Yozgat of which hand clapping is characteristic.

Sallama is a dance in which swinging legs and body are prominent and the word *sallama* itself means 'to swing.'

Yalpalı, 'to sway about,' gives its name to a dance which has this movement.

İki parmak zeybeği is the name of a dance characterized by the clicking of two fingers. The dance gets its name from the fact that the Turkish for 'two fingers' is *iki parmak.* The names of some dances tell the number of the dancers participating; for example, *dörtlü oyunu* from Urfa (a dance with four dancers). *Tek* shows a single dancer as in *tek oyun.*

The group of dances which characteristically place people facing each other, either singly or in rows, are recognizable by their use of the word *karşılama* from the verb meaning 'to face.'

Dönme oyunu, the revolving dance, shows its characteristic in its title by the use of the verb, *dönmek,* 'to turn.'

From Zonguldak comes the improvised women's dance, *göbekleşme.* This name has an interesting connotation, for it means 'the touching together of the navels of the women,' the central movement in this dance.

Skipping and closely allied hopping movements can be discovered in the dances with titles which include the words *sekme* or *sıçrama*; while *titreme* is the name given to dances which include shivering movements.

Uzun hava from Uludağ and Bursa is a dance of high jumps, *uzun* meaning 'long.' Its opposite dance from the same region is the *alçak hava.*

Certain names refer to the tempo of the dance. *Ağır* means 'slow,' and many dances are preceded by this adjective, indicating a slow dance; e.g., *ağır ayak, ağır bar, ağır hava, ağır kayda, ağır oyun, ağır tikveş, ağır zeybek oyunu.* Another adjective meaning 'slow,' *durgun,* is used for the dance *durgun çoruk.* There are also adjectives signifying lively movements like *coşkun çoruh, kıvrak çoruh, deli horon.*

Names of some dances are either attributed to the person who set the form of the dance or honor an important person; e.g., *Ali Abdurrahman Paşa halayı, Ata barı* (dedicated to Atatürk), *Mehmet Turhan barı, Osman ağa, Selim Sırrı zeybeği.*

Some names of dances specify the object or weapon held by the dancers like *kamalı halay*(dagger), *mendil zeybeği*(handkerchief), *kaşık oyunu*(spoon), *zilli oyun*(finger cymbals).

The names of many dances show the town or region from which the dance comes; for instance, *Artvin barı, Balıkesir zeybeği, Bitlis barı, Burdur zeybeği, Rize horonu, Tavas zeybeği, Van koççarisi.* The name might, on the other hand, specify a certain relation to an ethnic group like *Aşiret halayı, Laz halayı, Kürt barı, Yürük halayı, Türkmen kızı.* The word *yerli* meaning 'native' or 'indigenous' precedes a dance's name to show the local reference to the origin of the dance.

There are some dances the names of which refer to legendary figures, local heroes who rebelled against corrupt and tyrannous governments and famous outlaws who robbed the rich to give to the poor. Köroğlu, a rebel against tyranny, beloved throughout Tur-

key for his bravery and generosity, also known as a poet, has many dances which bear his name. These are usually combat dances with sword or dagger or without weapons, and some are chain dances.

Osman Efe, a basket weaver, nicknamed Sepetçioğlu, was visited by a rich landowner. The landowner annoyed Osman Efe and they began first to quarrel and then to fight. Osman Efe was carrying only a basket whilst the rich landowner was equipped with a shield of silver. During the fight Osman Efe killed his enemy. Having killed a landowner, he was now an outlaw and so escaped to the mountains where he was followed by government forces. He is another public hero who is remembered by a dance bearing his name, and it is by this dance that he could have made his escape from the encircling government forces. Today this dance is performed by a man and woman in opposing movements, one turning to the left, one to the right. A similar hero, Şeyh Şamil, who escaped from the Czar's soldiers by dancing, is remembered by dances in Eastern Turkey and Caucasia bearing his name.

Certain dances get their names from the occasions which they celebrate. An example of this is the *arpalı oyunu* (*arpa* means 'barley'). This is a dance performed in front of heaps of barley to celebrate a good crop.

Köroğlu, a dagger dance from Central Turkey (Photograph by Ara Güler)

APPENDIX

The Kols

From: Evliya Efendi. *Narrative of Travels in Europe, Asia, and Africa in the Seventeenth Century* . . . Translated from the Turkish by the Ritter Joseph von Hammer. London, 1934, vol. I, part 2, pp. 240-49.

"The Fools and Mimics of Constantinople whenever there is a feast of Imperial circumcision, nuptials, or victory, from two to three hundred singers, dancers, comics, mimics, with mischievous boys of the town, who have exhausted seventy cups of the poison of life and misrule, crowd together and play day and night. At some private weddings they gain in a night the sum of a thousand piastres, collecting the money in the half drum after each dance. If I were to describe all that I have seen of their skill and show, my book would become an elogy of these entertaining fellows (Motrib). They are divided into twelve companies, called Kol.

The first company of Parpul are three thousand boys, they dwell at Balata, and are for the greater part Gypsies.

The second company of Ahmed are three hundred boys, also of Balata, they are the dancing boys, the lords of misrule.

The third company of Osman are four hundred; there is no Gypsy amongst them; they are all excellent mimics (Mukallid).

The fourth company of Servi are three hundred; Armenian, Greek, and Jew boys.

The fifth company Babanazlı are two hundred dancing boys, whose . . . motions set all the assemblies at circumcision feasts in an uproar.

The sixth company of Zemerrud are three hundred Greek and Armenian boys of the quarters of the Seven Towers, Narlı Kapu, Sulu Monastır, who have stripped many a rich man of his wealth, and laid him on the floor. They are famous in acting the parts of

the Semitji (bakers), Kharajji (collectors of tribute), Gumosharajji (silver searchers), and for singing Greek strophes.

The seventh company of Chelebi are two hundred boys; the most famous of all in stripping their admirers by their charms.

The eighth company of Akideh, are two hundred boys; their chief is Pehlivan Eyyub, who is a poet, writer, learned man, singer and traveller. These boys are the most elegant and best fashioned, deed-learnt in a thousand tricks.

The ninth company of Jewahir are two hundred boys of the jewellers of Galata, all Greeks and Armenians, famous for their comical talents in mimicking, and making their auditory laugh. There are many boys amongst them, each of whom is worth a tribute of Greece, and perplexes the spectators by his beauty.

The tenth company of Patakoghlı are three hundred boys; they are all Jews, excellent comics and have musical talents.

The eleventh company of Khashuta are one hundred and five boys, who are also all Jews.

The twelfth company of Semurkash are two hundred boys, who are all Jews, and all tumblers, jugglers, fire eaters, ball players and cup-players, who pass the whole night in showing their tricks, and ask more than one hundred piastres for a night's performance; as these Jewish boys have the greatest antipathy to the Gypsies who compose the first company they generally set a band of these Jewish boys against a band of Gypsies, which produce the strangest scenes. Thus they represent the play of a Jew surprised in flagrante with a Gypsy girl, the girl is seated on an ass, and conducted through the street with nasty intestines on her head, which makes the people nearly die with laughing. In short these twelve companies of boys, who are called Chengi (cinaedi) vie with each other in producing the most voluptuous dances, and most comical scenes. They are all dressed in gold stuff, and endeavor to excel while passing under the Alai-koshk, where the Emperor is seated, so as to attract his attention by their fits and tricks. Since Adam descended from Paradise on earth, never was there seen such a crowd of . . . boys than under Sultan Murad IV. . . .

The Tavern-keepers; there are in the four jurisdictions of Constantinople, one thousand such places of misrule, kept by Greeks, Armenians and Jews. Though wine was prohibited by the Koran in the fourth year of the Hejira, yet as the Ottoman Empire is great

and mighty, there is an Inspector of wine established, of whom mention has been made amongst the Inspectors of Constantinople. He stays at the iron-gate of Galata. The greatest number of taverns at Constantinople are to be found near the gate Pasmatia, the sand-gate, the new fish-market, etc. Whoever names Galata and Khasskoi, says taverns; because they are there as numerous as at Leghorn, and Malta. Along the Bosphorus taverns are found in all villages bordering on it; the greatest number of them are at Ortakoi, Kuruchesmeh, Arnaudkoi, Jenikoi, Tarapia, Boyukdereh, and on the Asiatic shore at Kuzunjik, Chengelkoi, Scutari and Kadikoi. The word Gumrah (seducing from the road) is most particularly to be applied to the taverns of Galata, because there all kinds of playing and dancing boys, mimics and fools, flock together and delight themselves day and night. . . . The boys of the taverns, shameless drunkards, and all the partisans of wine pass singing songs, tumbling down and rising again. . . .

The last of all the guilds are the Jewish tavern-keepers, two hundred men and one hundred shops, who, in spite of the Greeks and Armenians, are all masked in the most precious dresses. Their playing and dancing boys, and other fair are all dressed as Ajemoghlans, or Levends with Jubbeh, Makluna and Kantosh, with head-dresses of the garrisons of the frontier, with sable-caps and different sashes wrapped round them."

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Only a few studies of Turkish dances have been written in French, German or English. A considerable amount of material exists, especially on regional dances. However, these references are omitted here because they are in Turkish. A number of books and articles, including those in Turkish, are listed in "Bibliography of Asiatic Musics, Seventh Installment, Section 3. Turkic-speaking peoples." *Notes,* (June, 1949), pp. 419-33.

The following are a few studies on aspects of Turkish dance.

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On dancing girls and dancing boys: "Wollüstige Tänze in der Türkei." *Konstantinopel und St. Petersburg, der Orient und der Norden,* vol. I (1806), pp. 14-22.

On the ritualistic character of Turkish dances: Ahmed Adnan Saygun. "Des danses d'Anatolie et de leur caractère rituel." *Journal of the International Folk Music Council,* vol. II (1950), pp. 10-14.

On regional dances: Halil Bedii Yönetken. "Turkish Folk Dances." *Rosin the Bow,* vol. IV, no. 7 (1952), pp. 27-8. D. W. James. "Some Turkish Folk Dances." *The Dancing Times,* October, 1946, pp. 14-15. Metin And. "Turkish Dances." *Dance,* vol. XXXII, no. 8 (1958) pp. 54-7, 62.

Note: In the fourth cummulative supplement of Paul Magriel's *Bibliography of Dancing,* the only study listed in the Turkish section has nothing to do with Turkish dances. This article, titled "Der Volkstanz in der schwäbischen Turkei," is a study of Central European dances.

DANCE PERSPECTIVES 4
THE ALHAMBRA BALLET
by IVOR GUEST
To be published in September

Dancing girl (*çengi*) (Jean Baptiste van Moor. *Recueil de cent estampes representant differentes nations du Levant*. Paris, 1714)